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Weekly audited distribution (52 weeks) to 31/12/11 - 42,235 (GEM Series). Audited by David Pinder & Co Ltd. Chartered Accountants.

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 31ST, 2013



Wales and the Six Nations

See pages 15 and 40

Out and About with The GEM

Page 16

Valentine's Day Dining: Pages 18 & 19

'Town centre shops need our support'

— SAYS COUNCILLOR

WITH another national retailer set to close in Holton Road, a local councillor says more effort is needed to support independent businesses in Barry town centre.

Coun Ian Johnson said new, local shops should take priority, and that the Vale Council could take 'innovative steps' to

by **TIM CHAPMAN**

stimulate business activity.

High streets are under commercial attack as never before, with internet companies diverting more and more business on-line.

The Blockbuster store in Holton Road is due to cease trading, and Coun Johnson said local shop-

ping areas needed to learn from each other to ensure long term security.

He explained: "Town centres have faced a tough time recently and the collapse of traditional chains, such as Blockbuster, shows the problems that 'bricks and mortar' stores are facing."

"One of the problems for Holton Road is that there were a number of key sites which were held by national companies and as they have hit problems, one by one, the shopping has begun to look a little threadbare. "However, some of the other town centres in the Vale have proven to be more resilient, with local independent stores keeping the area flourishing, as well as showing pride in their shopping precinct."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

BARRY HEALTHY HEART'S GENEROUS GIFTS



Barry Healthy Heart recently presented two cheques for £100 each to a local community association and park. To read the full story, turn to page 4.

Vale litter company denies it has called in administrators

THE company which operates the litter wardens in the Vale, has denied that any part of it is in administration.

XFOR, which hands out fines for litter, dropped cigarette butts and dog fouling, was reported last week to have called in administrators – the national company SFP – with unpaid debts of £160,000 due to HM Revenue and Customs.

In response, the company argued that it was "restructuring" and that the use of the term "in administration" was incorrect.

However, when asked by The GEM, the

company admitted that the debt to HMRC had not been paid yet, and was still the subject of negotiation.

A spokeswoman for XFOR said: "In reference to the apparent administration of one of our companies, XFOR wanted to provide an explanation."

"For some time, the shareholders of XFOR have been trading through several independent limited companies. We engage in a very wide range of services, and this was the most effective way to organise our activities and expand into new areas."

"It was, however, the ambition of our current shareholders to create a group structure that was linked by more than the XFOR brand. This would see all current trading companies become subsidiaries."

"Although we retain the capability of keeping our activities organised with their own structure and operations, this makes our business structure more streamlined and transparent for all involved."

"We will also be able to offer individuals within each company the chance to become shareholders."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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'Learn lessons from Bristol!'

SODJ Bradford (GEM letters, recently) considers it preferable to give money to councils who, by his own admission, intend to cut valuable services but not salaries, rather than make Cardiff Airport into the international airport it should be.

It's a spurious argument: I would be happy to bet that there is no possibility of increases in budgets for the NHS or councils, regardless of any investment in the airport.

Cardiff Airport has been allowed to sink to its present level of uselessness by management who care little for the local community and the money and jobs a thriving airport would bring to the area, and who

have shown no interest in providing a service sorely needed in Wales.

Travelling to Bristol is bad enough from the Vale, but how much worse is it for travellers from west and mid Wales?

Before any money is spent, there should be a concerted effort to bring more airlines to Cardiff, with a good variety of routes to the popular destinations.

With competitive landing fees and a focus on meeting the needs of the Welsh community, the airport will see an improvement in air traffic, and an increase in customers and income, which would provide the means to improve the facilities.

Seek advice from the Bristol Airport management team and give us an airport service we can be proud of!

L Pinson, Barry

Who has a photo of this Monarch?

BETWEEN 1948 and 1951, a vessel named *Charlton Monarch* was tethered in Barry's No.1 Dock, close to the two graving docks.

She had started life as a liner with Canadian National Steamships as their *Prince David*, and was a sister ship to the *Prince Robert* and the *Prince Henry*.

She served in World War Two as the *HMCS Prince David*, having been converted to an armed cruiser, and later converted to a landing craft support vessel.

After the war, she was sent to Belgium with the *Prince Robert* and they were rebuilt as passenger ships for Chandris Lines for use on immigrant ships to South America

and Australia, with the *Prince Robert* carrying the name *Charlton Sovereign*.

Due to many mechanical problems, the *Charlton Monarch* was sent to Swansea for scrapping in 1951 after her lay up at Barry. I have been photographing ships for nearly 40 years and am keen to get a photograph of *Charlton Monarch*, preferably in Barry at that time.

I have managed to obtain one of the *Charlton Sovereign* in final form and as she was identical, I can see that she was in Chandris colours at the time.

So, is there anyone reading this who knows of a photograph of her? I would be delighted to obtain a copy even at a price!

J B Wilmot, Dinas Powys,

Pendoylan Spitfire

YOUR correspondent who wrote in The GEM (January 17) under the headline 'Answer to air crash mystery', reports on a 20-year-old Australian flyer crashing his Spitfire at Pendoylan.

My earlier letter referred to another clearly different crash south of Llantrithyd. The only similarity appears to be that the crash at Llantrithyd is rumoured to have involved another Australian.

This may, therefore, be untrue and relate to the Pendoylan downing.

Christopher Short, Barry.

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'TIME TO KILL OFF RHOOSE PROPOSAL'

WITH regard to the letter in last week's GEM headed 'Is Rhosee a case of planning by stealth?' I would like to reinforce the comments made by fellow GEM reader, Fiona Morton, regarding fears over the planning application for 350 properties to be built north of the railway line off Pentir-y-De.

Not only are her concerns very valid, but I would like to point out that actually the planning application is not rejected, rather delayed, awaiting an environmental survey to answer some procedural irregularities – not least due to the proximity of the site to the airport.

The amended Environmental Statements (ES) have all been submitted and will be reviewed accordingly. I refer to application number 2010/00686/EAO. I suggest readers of The GEM read it, because unless there is huge pressure, both publicly and politically, the application could, quite likely, be approved.

Fiona is absolutely right to suggest this application is a precursor to an adjacent development of similar size, bringing the total dwelling numbers to over 600.

The pursuit of rateable income in favour of destroying our open spaces and green fields is not only reckless, it is environmentally irresponsible; moreover, it is not wanted nor needed.

Local infrastructure, particularly schooling, cannot absorb this without enormous additional taxpayers' expenditure.

The original application was submitted by the National Assembly of Wales for Bellway Homes back in April 2008. Since then, the vision for RAF St Athan no longer exists and the dream of this area becoming a centre of excellence for the aerospace industry has not materialised.

In light of this, projected population forecasts since 2008 will undoubtedly have changed. With pupil populations at the local schools remaining broadly flat, I would suggest that Rhosee actually is

'Clear YOUR drains, council!'

WITH reference to the article in last week's GEM headed 'Don't block local drains' from Coun Richard Bertin, could the council heed its own words?

During the recent heavy rains, Tynnewydd hill was like a river – water rushing down to the New Jerusalem church, pooling in a lake, then overflowing the pavement and running down to Holton Road.

The cause? Blocked drains.
Come on, council, look after your drains!
Mrs Janice George, Barry.

Grateful to the road rescuers

THROUGH your newspaper, I would like to extend my extreme thanks to the fire and rescue crew who came to my aid last night (Friday).

While travelling from East Aberthaw towards Rhosee on the coast road, unfortunately my car became stuck in a flooded road caused by the heavy rain and thawing snow.

Not only did they attend promptly and push the car out of the water, but they stayed to ensure that my passenger and I were safe and warm, until they were satisfied I had been able to contact the AA to recover the vehicle.

Gareth Williams

not in dire need of such substantial developments.

The application for 90 homes south of the railway line is a mature and measured response to a general increase in UK population figures, unlike the infamous LDP.

In the Non-Technical Survey submitted with the application in 2010, the land was surveyed and deemed as a grade 3B which is termed "not of the best and most versatile agricultural land".

It does, however, support many wildlife species, including commuting bat species and grazing land for livestock. Also, this area of land provides a drainage plateau for the water run-off from the elevated fields to the north and the natural soak-aways from Murlande Way.

Anyone who uses Happy Valley Lane will appreciate the volume of water that runs through this area – sadly flooding and Rhosee Point are words that appear in the same sentence all too often.

It's time to kill off this proposal once and for all. Not all open spaces are particularly green or pleasant and a good dollop of common sense has prevailed at the West Point Barry Waterfront.

I would suggest that Vale planning has done its bit to provide adequate housing needs for many decades to come, before we need to look at tearing up and concreting over the Vale of Glamorgan countryside.

Richard Hale, Rhosee

MELANCHOLY REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP

IWRITE in reference to his column in The GEM on Thursday, January 24 entitled 'View From The Vale' by Coun Neil Moore, Leader of the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

I would have gained much pleasure from it but, sadly, it was just a melancholy reflection of what has gone on before within the leadership of the Vale.

He writes about the fiasco on Barry Island on New Year's day as a direct result of the New Year's Day swim. He very foolishly remarks that usually the council is given prior notice by organisers of similar events, which triggers a traffic management plan to be put in place.

He goes on to say this was not the case in this instance. Come on, Coun Moore, who are you trying to kid? The Barry Island New Year's Day swim has been a major attraction on Barry Island for many years – do you mean to say that you did not know of its existence?

The Vale Council recently spent around £500,000 on an overflow car park on Nells Point, which they did not even have the commonsense to open and use on New Year's Day. His absurd comments on the rein-

statement of the mobile library beggar belief: In the Labour manifesto prior to the election of May 2012 his party promised or pledged to reinstate the mobile library in its entirety for the benefit of every one.

Sadly, this was obviously just another vote puller. If you refer to The GEM (January 24, 2013) you will immediately note that this promise, or election pledge, has now been watered down.

Coun Moore now states categorically that they wish to reinstate the mobile library, only to serve rural areas where they have no library, which is a clear swag from that which they pledged or promised in the run-up to the election of May 2012.

One thing is for sure, Coun Moore and his beloved Labour group need to remind themselves of who they were and who they supposedly are, plus how they began, and who helped put them there in the first place.

At the moment, they are all behaving like champagne socialists, which is nothing like how the Labour movement set out to be many generations ago.

Barrie V Evans
(Coordinator, Barry First Group, Independent)

ODE TO A LOST WORLD

WELL, now we've had the 'BBC' (not the broadcaster, although another proven waste of public money!)

I'm talking about 'Blair, Brown and Cameron' – could this country have fared worse? I doubt it.

Whatever happened to real people? I mean someone who actually worked for a living and wasn't born with a silver spoon in their mouth and brainwashed by university into believing they can run a country when they couldn't run a toy train set – superbly educated, but no commonsense.

Urban bystander

I remember the fifties after the war, when almost everyone was poor.

But what little they had, they shared, for there was always those who cared.

Not many of them left today,

they've either changed, or passed away.

I remember green meadows, woods and countryside,

the river we swam and fished in, deep and wide.

That river now is no more than a stream,

and the countryside gone, as if it were all a dream.

Now built up areas and tarmac roads provide housing for population overloads.

Gone is the country I used to roam,

and gone is the feeling, that was my home.

Colin Dudley,
Barry.

Doing, better than saying!

THE Vale of Glamorgan Council have now agreed their approach to the Local Development Plan, which is to step back to their previous strategy – but not, as in Labour's election pledge, to scrap it.

Another election promise was to give the public a bigger say on council issues. Let us hope they can keep to that commitment.

The council's previous policy, to consult the public about the LDP, said they would; provide clear choices; not lead people; ask how communities want to contribute; give all sections of the community a chance to express their views; be clear, honest, and accessible with information; use clear language; be timely when people can

participate; listen, and feed back results and how they have affected decisions.

Many believe that the consultation fell well short of these fine words so it will be interesting to see how the new Labour-controlled council improve on public consultation this time around.

I tend to assess those in power by what they do, rather than how they present themselves, or what they say.

Judgements need to be evidence-based and one very good measure of planning consultation is how often it changes anything.

Dennis Harkus
(FocusBARRY supporter)

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HIGH TIDE TIMES

(UNTIL FEBRUARY 7)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary.

For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time	Ht	Time	Ht
	AM	M	PM	M
31 Thur	08.51	9.7	21.11	9.4
01 Fri	09.28	9.6	21.49	9.2
02 Sat	10.09	9.1	22.34	8.9
03 Sun	10.57	8.8	23.24	8.4
04 Mon	11.51	8.3		
05 Tues	00.31	7.9	13.07	7.8
06 Wed	02.00	7.9	14.39	8.0
07 Thur	03.19	8.3	16.03	8.5

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should always check with a tide table specific to their location.

'Route to St Cyres school has a flooding problem' - claims Dinas Powys councillor

FLOODING problems on the Dinas Powys Ash Path need to be resolved urgently, a local Plaid Cymru councillor insists.

The path is a vital pedestrian link between the village and Penarth.

The Vale Council told The GEM it was in negotiations with a landowner with the aim of upgrading the path.

Plaid say problems with the path have become more pressing because the closure of the St Cyres site in Dinas means more chil-

dren are using the path to Penarth.

Plaid councillor Chris Franks raised the issue at a Vale Council meeting and said parents were keen to see it resolved.

"The recent rain and snow has once again shown clearly how inadequate the Ash Path is for walkers.

"At last, we have forced the council to take this problem seriously. For too long, we have been told nothing can be done.

"Apparently, the council is now considering allocating £25,000 in the next scheme of projects to improve conditions.

"The object appears to be to widen the path and provide a cycleway from Dinas Powys to Penarth along the Ash Path."

Coun Franks went on: "We all know that the council has to resolve the land ownership but residents and parents want action not excuses.

"The council supported the closure of the St Cyres annexe and was

warned about the flooding issues."

The Vale Council said there were plans to improve the condition of the path, and that work had been ongoing for some time in an attempt to reach agreement with the landowner and other interested parties. Planned improvements envisage a shared foot-way-cycleway.

SAFETY FIRST

Coun Chris Elmore insisted that the safety of children was uppermost in the minds of the Vale Council, and that he was happy to discuss the matter with Coun Franks.

"It is interesting that Councillor Franks should now raise this issue, some considerable time after work has been progressed on a scheme and negotiations commenced with the landowner.

"While, I am aware that he has raised the issue via the press in the past and will no doubt continue to do so, the reality is he has taken no part in trying to ensure

that this problem is resolved. Asking a question at council does not solve a problem, no matter how much Councillor Franks is trying to suggest it does.

"To therefore suggest that he and his party has forced the current administration to act cannot be further from the truth.

"Land ownership issues are not excuses as he suggests. It is a fact that we need the owner's permission and agreement to proceed.

"If Councillor Franks wants to assist in a constructive manner, rather than turning the issue into a political one through the press, then I would be very happy to meet and discuss the matter with him."

Coun Elmore added: "It is the safety, convenience, and well being of school children that is of fundamental importance to me, and I would have hoped that Councillor Franks would have been of the same mind."

TIM CHAPMAN

Teen queen Millie pledges support for Marie Curie

A BARRY schoolgirl is combining taking part in Miss Galaxy Wales on St David's Day with raising funds for the Marie Curie hospice in Penarth.

Millie Charles-Davies (14) a pupil at Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg, told The GEM that she had a special reason for wanting to raise funds for one of the Vale's great causes.

She said: "My nan, Margaret Charles, passed away due to cancer two years ago and was helped by Marie Curie.

"As title holder of 'Miss Teen Galaxy Barry', my chosen charity will be Marie Curie and my aim is to raise funds by doing charity work and by getting involved in their events."

Millie explained: "I will be competing in the grand final of Miss Galaxy Wales on March 1, at the Park Hall Hotel, Lancashire, with girls from all over the country.

"I'll be travelling up on the Thursday before the contest with my parents, so I have a day to prepare."

Over a four-day period, a number of 'Galaxy' titles will be awarded to competitors from Wales, England and Scotland.

Millie said: "I am so

excited to have made it to the final and I can't wait to meet all the other girls.

"The winner of 'Miss Teen Galaxy Wales' will travel to the USA, with contestants from all over the world to compete in the international final. It's a once in a life time opportunity."

Millie's long-term plan is for a modelling career.



Millie Charles-Davies.

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Nursery pupils revel in the snow and prove dab hands in the kitchen!



THE intrepid nursery pupils at All Saints Church in Wales Primary School made the most of the recent snowy weather.

Wrapped up snugly in warm coats and wellies, they ventured outside to have fun in the snow all week. They made snow angels, stepping stones, footprints and even threw snowballs at their teacher, Mrs Boffy.

They kept warm with hot chocolate, delicious bread, which they baked themselves, and jam (sugar free, of course).

Headteacher Richard Ware was invited to join the children at snack time – he was very impressed with their baking skills and marked them down as future TV chefs! **LM**



Healthy Heart's community gift

Barry Healthy Heart recently presented two cheques for £100 each to the Chair of Castleland Community Association and Belvedere Park in support of the work they undertake within the community.

Colin Jones, the facilitator of the group, told THE GEM: "Since moving to the newly refurbished centre, which is a wonderful facility, we have been made so welcome by staff and we love it here."

"We are aware of the need for financial support and hope the contribution will help in some way."

Eileen Moore, chairperson, accepted the cheques on behalf of both organisations and thanked the group for their generous gifts and continued support. Funds will be used to provide benches for the garden and community café.

Shop support

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Coun Johnson added:

"We need to see what those areas are doing right in attracting business, and how we can better support those independent stores."

Coun Johnson said there had to be encouragement to "seed" stores on Holton Road and use people's energy and experience to make them successful: "It's pleasing to see new stores springing up like the record shop and bridal store near Thompson Street, but we need more innovation and ideas for shops."

"The Welsh

Government needs to review its business rate relief schemes and the Vale Council needs to think of innovative proposals which will attract and keep small businesses in Barry."

"I think that creating jobs like this in the heart of Barry must now be a priority for the council."

Nick Frangoulis of Holton Road Traders' Association stressed that a successful town centre was due to a number of factors.

He said: "The rate relief scheme has been a good initiative for the very small businesses – some get 60 per cent to 70 per cent off, even down to zero."

"It is also important that free car parking is maintained so customers are not pushed away."

Mr Frangoulis said landlords had an important role to play in attracting businesses that would stay in the long term.

"We don't want empty

units – quality of unit is down to landlords as well – we don't want a business in for just three months, we want it for as long as possible."

He said that recent upgrading of the town centre area had been successful: "The environment in Thompson Street (since the £1 million investment) looks lovely and is an example of attracting people to an area."

Lisa Eveleigh, of the Old Post Office Coffee Shop, located at the top of Holton Road, said she would welcome a move to encourage shop owners to work with each other.

"I think it would be good to have a co-ordinator employed by the council to bring all the shop owners together."

Lisa said another point made by local traders was that the council regenerated houses locally, but support for shops to improve fascias would make the area look more attractive too.

Bob Guy, a manager at the Vale Council responsible for economic projects, said it recognised that the downturn had hit the retail sector worse than most.

He added: "The council has invested in Barry town centre, and the centre has benefitted from regeneration area funding, for instance the Thompson Street renewal scheme."

"A Town Centres Framework is currently being prepared, and this will suggest ways the council could further help, including some innovative ways forward."

Litter company under scrutiny

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The spokesman continued: "We will also be able to offer individuals within each company the chance to become shareholders."

"With a view to completing this complex process, we consulted with SFP – not for their expertise in insolvency as suggested by the press, but for their insight into restructuring on this level."

"After much consultation, the first phase – which involves bringing individual limited companies into the XFOR Group – is now complete."

"From 2010 to 2012, we have grown by 20 per cent every year. After this period of restructuring is complete, we project a further 20 per cent growth in our workforce."

"In terms of local authority support, we remain committed to the same goal – helping local authorities to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for littering to people that litter."

"Local residents, many of whom dispose of litter correctly and support our work in the community, have nothing to worry about. We will continue to work with our local authority partners to make the streets cleaner."

The GEM asked about the £160,000 debt to HM Revenue and Customs, as Vale Council taxpayers would be unhappy about a company that has failed to settle such a bill.

The company spokeswoman added: "We are hopeful that we will get a good resolution regarding this. However, we are still in negotiations with the Inland Revenue and the matter has not been resolved yet."

CASH FLOW

In a statement, SFP said: "The nationwide insolvency practitioners SFP have been appointed administrators to Aqua LAS Limited after the company ran into insurmountable cash flow difficulties."

"From its base in London, Aqua LAS – formerly known as XFOR Local Authority Support Limited – provided professional services to local authorities and had an average annual turnover of £500,000 per annum."

"However, SFP's Simon and Daniel Plant – both licensed members of the Insolvency Practitioners' Association – were appointed administrators

on January 4, 2013, after the company experienced acute cash flow problems."

Simon Plant, group partner at SFP, added: "Following the financial problems experienced by Aqua LAS, the business and its assets have now been sold."

The GEM asked SFP who the business had been sold to, but a spokesman said that he could not give this information at this time.

Miles Punter, the director of visible services and housing at the Vale Council, said: "The evidence suggests that Aqua LAS, a company which formerly traded as XFOR LAS, has gone into administration."

"We have not been notified of any financial difficulties with XFOR LAS, the company which the council engaged on a 12-month trial for litter enforcement in July 2012."

"As we only pay XFOR after a Fixed Penalty Notice has been legitimately issued, and only for a proportion of the notice value, XFOR would have no debts with the council."

'NOT HAPPY'

Plaid Cymru councillor Ian Johnson said that residents were not happy with the company's work in Barry town centre.

He said: "XFOR started work in the Vale in August last year, with the power to fine litter louts. Between then and the end of December they fined 1,140 people for litter."

"A total of 94 per cent of these, over a thousand, were for cigarette butts, with only three irresponsible owners fined for dog mess, 10 for throwing away food and 50 for litter."

"Obviously, we cannot tell how much litter was not thrown away by their presence, as people pocket their rubbish or use the bins provided, but these figures are slim pickings."

"Also, problems with the service were identified in a recent report to the Vale's economy and environment scrutiny committee, who noted staffing problems."

He said he was concerned about the recent news about the company: "Was anybody in the Vale Council told of this or were they kept in the dark by the company? Is their business model viable for the future?"

NEWS IN BRIEF

ELUNED PARROTT AM for South Wales Central, will be holding an advice surgery at Morrisons Supermarket, Penny Way, Barry, between 1pm and 2pm tomorrow (Friday, February 2).

ART4U walk

ART4U presents *The Coming of the Light*, a contemplative walk to celebrate the Celtic festival of Imbolc on Saturday, February 2 at 4.30pm, around Knap Lake and Gardens, Barry.

There will be a drumming workshop under the shelter at 2pm.

For more information, visit www.art4uwalks.org.uk.

Walk on the wild (life) side with the Penarth & District Ramblers

RECENTLY, seven walkers, along with leader William, enjoyed a fine adventure on a flat walk around part of the Gwent Levels, beginning at Uskmouth, before tramping down to

the coast and through quiet villages and hamlets on a dry day with lots of bright warm sunshine.

The pattern of ditches or reens on the Gwent or Caldicot Levels has been altered by the construction of the Newport

Wetlands Reserve, which covers an area of 145-acres and was previously a dumping ground for ash from Uskmouth Power Station.

Reens, sluice gates and pumps had been used to turn wetland areas into dry areas for pasture land, but new waterways have been constructed within the reserve to keep the land flooded with water to attract wildfowl and new footbridges and boardwalks, which are now part of the Wales Coast Path have been constructed on footpaths in the boggiest areas.

A peaceful walk beside reed beds adjacent to the sea wall with great views of the east and west Usk lighthouses (the latter is now a bed and breakfast establishment) afforded the group excellent views out over the mudflats before they turned inland through Saltmarsh to seek out a newly constructed wooden bird hide, where lunch was enjoyed in comfort while bird spotting.

Reaching the Goldcliff Pill, three salt water lagoons have been created to attract waders and wildfowl such as avocet, lapwing and oystercatchers which breed

in spring and widgeon, shoveler and black-tailed godwit that stop to feed in winter time along with dunlin and other waders which are able to roost out of reach of the high tides.

Disturbed a grey heron, they slithered their way across muddy fields and over new footbridges towards Nash with its glorious village church dedicated to St Mary, before crossing more bridges which led back to the RSPB centre for a quick cuppa before the journey home.

If weather conditions permit, the following walks will take place: **Meet at 8.30am at the Cogan Leisure Centre on February 2 for a 10-mile hard walk at Y Grib and Waun Fach; contact Barrie on 029 2053 0753.**

On February 3, meet 9am at Cogan Leisure Centre for a 9.5 mile moderate walk Fan Fawr and Fan Frynack; contact Barrie on 02920 530753.

Programmes and membership advice can be obtained from Pam on 029 2025 5102.

Joy Strangward

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Adult beginners in meditation & healing welcome. No previous experience necessary

Starting new Monday, 11th February 7pm - 8pm - £5.00 each

Wednesday, 13th February 10am - 11am - £ 5.00 each

Experience the peacefulness of a guided meditation and healing session.

For details contact Cheryl on

07450 831 328

email: cherylslangels@hotmail.co.uk

www.owlmanor.co.uk

If you cannot make either of these days but would like to experience a meditation or healing session then contact Cheryl, this can be accommodated at Owl Manor Guest House on Plymouth Road, Barry.

ILLEGAL GAS FITTER RECEIVES SUSPENDED PRISON SENTENCE

AN unregistered gas fitter has received a nine-month suspended prison sentence for illegally carrying out sub-standard gas work at two chip shops in south Wales.

Abergavenny Magistrates' Court heard on Monday, January 21, that Richard Trezise, from Maesteg, installed a chip fryer at a fish bar in New Tredegar between July and September 2011 that was classed as 'immediately dangerous'.

Gas Safe inspectors found a number of safety defects with the gas appliance, including pipework being connected in a way that could have resulted in a serious gas leak if not rectified.

The Health and Safety Executive

investigated and served Mr Trezise with a Prohibition Notice on December 12, 2011 preventing him from carrying out any further gas work until he was recognised by the Gas Safe Register.

However, in October 2012, a further complaint was received about Mr Trezise's work, this time in relation to the installation of a gas frying range at a fish bar in Penarth in the Vale.

An environmental health officer from Vale Council visited the premises and witnessed him working on the appliance.

The installation was inspected by a Gas Safe Register investigator and a number of deficiencies were found, leading to the equipment being classed as "at risk". Further investi-

gation revealed that Trezise had never registered for Gas Safe Register membership.

Trezise, of Christopher Road, Maesteg, pleaded guilty to four charges under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and a single breach of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

He was given a nine month prison sentence, suspended for two years, and was ordered to pay £1,500 in costs.

After the hearing, HSE Inspector Sara Joanne Carter, said: "Every year there are fires, explosions and people are killed by carbon monoxide poisoning as a direct result of gas appliances being improperly installed or maintained. In order to prevent such incidents, it is a funda-

mental requirement that anyone who works on gas appliances is competent to do so.

"The law requires both employers and the self-employed to register with the Gas Safe Register. Richard Trezise was neither a Gas Safe Registered engineer, nor had he undertaken any formal training or assessment.

"Because he had some experience in the manufacture of chip fryers, he believed he was competent. However, the serious safety deficiencies we identified with his work proves that wasn't the case. He was operating in an illegal and unsafe manner."

Further information about gas safety can be found online at www.hse.gov.uk/gas.

Dinas author's Kindle book

A first time author from Dinas Powys, who was turned down by more than 100 publishers and agents, has pub-

lished his novel on Amazon Kindle.

Brian Wolfenden from Dinas Powys explained: "It is virtually impossible for a first time author to get published via a

normal agent or publication house.

"However, the growth of e-books via Kindle, tablet, iPhone and computer has opened the opportunity for authors to bypass the conventional route and publish directly themselves.

"Now I have published *Quest of the Dicepters* on Amazon Kindle and it is available worldwide to e-book readers. It is a story about how life might have evolved on another planet."

Brian's book is the first of a planned trilogy and is already attracting reviews.

Attempted robbery: POLICE ISSUE APPEAL

POLICE in Penarth investigating an attempted robbery at a corner shop shortly after 1.30pm on Thursday, January 24, have issued an e-fit image of a man who entered the shop and threatened a member of staff, demanding money.

After making several demands, all of which were refused, he left the shop as another customer entered, police said.

He was described as white, in his early 20s, with a local accent. He



An e-fit image of the suspect.

was wearing a dark coloured, waist length, hooded coat and mustard coloured chinos.

After leaving the shop at the junction of Pill

Street and Little Dock Street, he made off along Little Dock Street towards Cogan Leisure Centre.

Penarth Inspector Darren Grady praised the "calmness" of the shop assistant and added: "We have carried out extensive house to house enquiries and increased patrols in the area."

Anyone with information is asked to contact Barry CID on 01446 731606 or 101; or Crimestoppers free on 0800 555111, quoting reference 62130023200.

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Jenner Park Primary pupils enjoy 'cultural exchange'



The pupils learnt lots of useful facts about life in Honduras.

JENNER PARK
International Club is made up of members from classes throughout the school.

Children in the club have linked our school with Escuela Francisco Morazan Rafael Primary School in Honduras.

International Club have been learning all about the life and culture of the children in our linked school in Honduras while also teaching the children in that school all about our life here in Barry.

Our international work has recently been awarded the International School Award Foundation. Well done, the International Club!

D J Morris

Castleland community has range of activities

CASTLELAND Community Centre has announced several new activities at the centre.

Following refurbishment of the centre last year, demand has increased both for day time groups and evening groups.

The new activities include: Fitness Class for fit 50s, strong 60s and sprightly 70s! (Mondays 10.30am – 11.30am); computers in the community (Wednesday mornings and afternoons starting from January 30); Castaways Luncheon Club (Wednesdays 10.30am– 2.30pm starting from February 6); Drop In Centre

Parent and Toddler Group (Tuesdays 1pm – 3pm starting March 5); Crochet and social group (Thursdays 1pm – 3pm starting February 21).

The centre also has two new evening groups: Cake Decorating 6pm-9pm Thursdays and Nia Exercise classes, a combination of dance, martial arts and healing techniques a new fun way to keep fit.

For further information on these or any of the activities at the centre, contact Julie Weidemann, the centre manager on 01446 701285.

'BEHIND THE SCENES' TOUR AT COUNCIL

Scouts in the Parlour!



SCOUTS VISIT THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR

SCOUTS and Cubs from the 11th Barry Sea Scout Group were welcomed at the **Barry Mayor's Parlour** by the Mayor of Barry, Coun Les Sword.

The young people were given a behind-the-scenes insight into his role as Mayor and councillor, and were also taken back in time to learn some of the history of Barry.

At the end of the night, two new Scouts had the privilege of being invested at the Mayor's Parlour, and were welcomed to Scouting on behalf of the Queen.



ABOVE: Coun Sword greeting the 11th Barry Sea Scout group.

The Little Blue Deli

NEW The Little Blue Deli introduces a **HOME DELIVERY SERVICE**

ROAST DINNERS NOW BEING DELIVERED EVERY DAY



Turkey with cranberry sauce & stuffing - £6.00

Beef with Yorkshire pudding - £6.00

Lamb with mint sauce - £6.50

Pork with apple sauce - £6.00

Mushroom & Walnut Wellington - £6.00

Squash stuffed with leeks, cheese & thyme - £6.00

Childrens roast - £3.95

All Sunday roasts are delivered with roast potatoes, mashed potatoes, sprouts, carrots and cabbage.

Potato Gratin - £2.50

Extra roast potatoes - £2.00

Cauliflower Cheese - £2.50

Extra Yorkshire puddings - £1.00

Honey roast parsnips - £1.50

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Extra vegetables - £1.50

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Monday to Saturday deliveries from 5pm to 8pm.

Sunday deliveries from midday to 6pm.

Bookings taken from 9am to 5pm daily.

£1 delivery charge will apply to all orders. £3 delivery charge to Rhoose, Aberthaw, Sully, Dinas Powys, Wenvoe.

SUNDAY BREAKFAST

Order from 9am to 11.30am for delivery slots from 10am to 1pm

Full English Breakfast - £4.00

Sausage, 2 rashers of bacon, fried egg, beans, tomato, mushrooms, hash browns, black pudding.

Upgrade to large - £5.50

- include an extra egg, sausage and rasher of bacon.

Welsh Breakfast - £4.50

Welsh pork and leek sausage, lava bread fritter, 2 rashers of bacon, fried egg, beans, tomato, mushrooms, hash browns, black pudding

Upgrade to large - £6.00

- include an extra egg, sausage and rasher of bacon.

American Breakfast - £4.00

2 pancakes with maple syrup, 2 rashers of bacon, sausage, scrambled egg.

Upgrade to large - £5.50

- includes extra pancake, sausage and bacon rasher.

Skinny Breakfast - £4.00

2 rashers of grilled bacon, weightwatcher sausage, poached egg, beans, mushrooms.

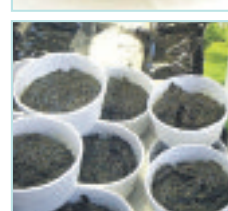
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'PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE UNDERPINS OUR DUTY TO CARE'

WE have a duty to care for vulnerable people, and this underpins our decisions in the Welsh Government against a tough and challenging financial context.

This is entirely consistent with our top priority and commitment to boost growth and jobs. I made this clear in a recent finance statement, allocating a further £91.5 million for health technologies, schools, housing, flood protection and transport schemes.

I also referred to our ongoing talks with the UK Government to progress with the Silk Commission's recommendations that Wales should have borrowing powers, with early access to finance, to boost our infrastructure.

Our economic and social priorities in the Welsh Government steer our decisions, with a reducing budget as a result of UK Government cuts.

Since 2010, we have taken major steps to boost the funding available for infrastructure investment in Wales.

This means that there will be more than £400m extra available in 2014-15 than set out in the 2010 UK Government Spending Review, reducing the real terms cut in funding from 50 per cent - 31 per cent, mainly as a result of our actions in

Welsh Assembly Notes



by Vale AM
JANE HUTT
(Minister for Finance and Leader of the House)

the Welsh Government.

Developing affordable housing is high on the agenda for infrastructure investment, as was clear from my announcement of an additional £30m for the Social Housing Grant and Independent Living Grant.

This is on top of additional allocations made for housing last year - £10 million in June for a new scheme to bring empty properties back into housing use, £6m for the innovative Welsh Housing Partnership (this Partnership now stands at some £100m in total), resulting in an overall increase of £46m in the housing capital budget, which now stands at £107m.

Access to good quality affordable housing is important for our economy and for our communities, for children and young people, the elderly and disabled people. It is vital for vulnerable people and those in housing need.

Unfortunately, the impact of the UK Government's 'Bedroom Tax' could have an adverse impact on many people, including 600 households in the Vale of Glamorgan.

We have expressed

our concerns to the UK Government at every opportunity, as constituents come forward with their fears about how they will manage. It is anticipated that up to two thirds of the households affected will include disabled people.

Many of these will be affected by other welfare benefit cuts and changes. We are supporting local authorities in Wales, like the Vale Council, to help mitigate the impact of these housing benefit changes, and working with advice agencies and Shelter Cymru to ensure that advice is available.

Two weeks ago, Carl Sargeant AM, the Local Government and Communities Minister, announced that the Welsh Government would provide £22m additional funding to make up the 10 per cent shortfall in funding for council tax benefits being transferred to us by the UK Government on April 1. The funding will be used to increase the maximum level of support people who are eligible for council tax benefit from 90 per cent-100 per cent.

This means that two-thirds of those people who were expecting to pay council tax for the first time will now not have to do so.

This significantly improves the financial position of vulnerable households in Wales.

Since December, the impact of the UK Government's raft of changes to welfare benefits has become clearer, compounded by the recent 1 per cent cap on benefits, which will penalise the vulnerable even further.

This is one of the most important decisions we have made in the Welsh Government - to protect the vulnerable and in doing so, to empower and enable them to live independently and contribute to our communities and our economy.

'Thank you' from council candidate

I AM writing to thank all those people who came out to vote for me in the by-election at Twyn ward, Dinas Powys, last Thursday (January 24).

Although the weather was extremely inclement, and ice and snow still covered many of the pavements, more than 300 hardy voters made it to the polling station (there were also 119 postal votes).

The vacant seat on the community council was hotly contested,

but after the count, I was declared the winner by a margin of 41 votes.

I regard it as a great honour to be entrusted to represent the people of Twyn for the next four years.

I will do my very best to be a worthy community councillor, not only for those who voted for me, but for all the residents of the ward and Dinas Powys as a whole.

Once again, my sincerest thanks.
Coun Andy Robertson,
Dinas Powys.

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BAZAAR
MEMBERS of the Crossway Methodist Church, Barry, are trying to raise funds to replace the church roof, which has been hit by copper thieves and is now in need of complete replacement.

On Tuesday, February 11, at 2pm, they will hold a winter bazaar, with nearly new, jumble, cakes and numerous other stalls; free entry.

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Penarth Computer Club CARRY ON LEARNING!

EVERYBODY suffers when severe weather comes along and the recent snowfall and frosty spell meant having to cancel our meeting for January 22.

We did our best to let members know in advance and apologise to any visitors who braved the conditions and were disappointed.

I have recently come across more than one person who uses a home computer, but didn't grow up with computers and consequently spends a lot of time wrestling with even small tasks.

It is a familiar story and was the original impetus for the formation of the club – to help the 'oldies' get a grip on the technology. It has been doing it for 20 years and absorbed much of the associated technologies of digital cameras and telephones, emailing and the Internet.

On the one hand the advances in gadgetry and sophistication are getting more difficult to cope with, yet we find that the original need remains. People are not always comfortable with their computers.

That is understandable for complicated tasks, but it also applies

to the basics, where a little more familiarity with them would pay enormous dividends in time and effort saved.

The users I mentioned above are quite capable of completing the task they are undertaking.

They were, however, totally unaware of the time they could save themselves with a few simple clicks of the mouse or a couple of key-presses.

I find it interesting that each user has their own personal blind spots concerning the labour saving tips and I think I know why.

Once people learn one way of doing something, they keep doing it that same way in spite of there being several other ways of achieving the same result, often with fewer or more convenient actions.

A computer user's early sessions may be taught by a friend. Their hand movements can be too fast to follow.

Sometimes it is too much to be absorbed. In either case the learner is aware of the problem. If the 'teacher' has inefficient ways, then the inefficiency can be imparted and perpetuated. This is because we

are all creatures of habit.

I have come across users with years of experience who are still working far too hard to get the results they want and slap their head when shown a better way.

To help all these users, we have assembled a document that sets out quite a few pieces of advice. On our website go to DOWN-LOADS and click on hints and tips 2009 to download it. It could be subtitled 'What I wish I had been told when I started'.

It is being improved and updated, but as it stands you might just discover enough to be kicking yourself for not finding out about all this years ago.

Have a look at Format Painter under Press Archive>2010>8th May. Browse for anything on Keyboard Shortcuts.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday, February 12 at All Saints Lesser Hall, Victoria Square, Penarth, 7.30pm for 8pm. The cancelled Brains Trust has been rescheduled to this meeting - see penarthcomputerclub.co.uk for more information.

HOWARD
DESMOND



Students inside the trailer.

GSUS trailer gives students a lesson with a difference

LAST week, years 7, 8 and 9 Barry Comprehensive School students had an RE lesson with a difference.

GSUS Live, a Christian-based charity with volunteers from local churches brought the GSUS Live trailer to our site.

The lesson took place in the GSUS Live trailer, a mobile classroom providing a stimulating environment in which students investigate Christian teachings on Fear, Forgiveness and Rejection.

A three-minute, fast-paced, 3D film introduced students to these themes. Students then chose a theme and investigated the story of a particular character. With the help of computer-based resources, students took on the role of 'agony uncles', advising their chosen character in their dilemma.

The experience showed students the Christian response to various issues, and provided an interesting addition to the religious education curriculum.

AC

Story of a wartime frozen Superfortress

IN February 1947, the American Boeing Superfortress B29 on a secret Cold War spying mission, made an emergency landing in the freezing wastes of north west Greenland – where it remained abandoned for the next 50 years.

The crew escaped alive. Tomorrow (February 1) at the meeting of Penarth Aviation Society, Lawrence Ferris will be introducing a video telling the story of how, in 1994, a privately financed team set out to repair and fly this iconic bomber back to the US.

The Superfortress was the biggest heavy bomber built

by the Americans, from the same line as the Boeing that had carried the atom bombs dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Although forced to land with engine trouble, the frame of the Superfortress remained intact, frozen in time and literally, on the ice-cap. There was a good chance that the rescuers could get it flying again, but nothing is ever certain.

Penarth Aviation Society meets on the first Friday of each month at the Penarth Conservative Club, 7.45pm for 8pm. Visitors are welcome.

Further information, telephone David Ephraim on 01446 721321.

SHOPPERS' GIFT, A 'TOM CAT' BIKE

A £1,500 donation from local Co-operative shoppers helped The Intersensory Club at Barry to buy a new Tom Cat tricycle.

The cash came from the Co-operative's Community Fund, in which customers opt to donate to good causes in the area.

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Heart Roadshow encourages debate on organ donation

ON Wednesday, January 30, the Welsh Government's Heart to Heart roadshow will visit Bridgend as part of its tour of Wales to raise awareness about organ donation amongst members of the public.

The roadshow, launched on Santes Dwyntwen Day, the patron saint of Welsh lovers, will visit each Local Health Board area in Wales before finishing its journey in Barry on St Valentine's Day.

In Bridgend county borough, 28.99 per cent of people have already signed the NHS Organ Donor Register, which is slightly lower than the overall Wales figure of 31.41 per cent (NHSBT 2011 figures).

The Heart to Heart roadshow is part of the Welsh Government's Heart to Heart campaign, which is encouraging people to get talking about organ donation, and whether for or against, make their wishes known to family and friends.

There's no need to make an appointment; people can simply drop in while out and about. If in favour of organ donation, visitors will be encouraged to sign up to the NHS Organ Donor Register and to have a conversation with their loved ones to

make them aware of their decision.

The roadshow in Bridgend will be on January 30 from 1pm-5pm at Sainsburys, Sarn (CF2 9SH).

A Welsh Government Bill to change the system of consent to deceased organ donation in Wales from the current opt in system to a soft-opt out was laid before the National Assembly for Wales in December 2012. Under the new proposed system, people will still be able to register a wish to be an organ donor, or they can register a wish not to be a donor.

The roadshow will be in Barry on February 14 from 1pm-5pm at Morrisons (CF63 4BA).

ALL SAINTS' PANCAKES!

TO mark the beginning of Lent, All Saints Church in Victoria Square, Penarth, is holding a pancake lunch on Shrove Tuesday, February 12.

It will be in the gallery inside the church at 12 noon.

There will be a choice of savoury and sweet pancakes plus tea/coffee for £6 (children £3). There will be also be stalls and a raffle.

All are welcome – proceeds go to the church re-ordering project.

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Move to a 'simple' state pension

THIS month, the UK Government announced plans to simplify future state pensions, and to improve the payments to women who often miss out because they have looked after children.

The Government believe that people deserve dignity and respect in old age, and that they should be provided with the support they need.

That is why we have delivered the biggest

ever rise in the basic state pension, are simplifying the state pension, and introducing auto-enrolment pension schemes in the workplace.

I say simple, but the explanation of why it is an improvement on the current system and how we get from where we are now to a single pension is anything but simple.

At the moment, we have two state pensions: The first is the basic state pension, which is based on your National Insurance contributions history (you get the full amount if you have con-

tributed for 30 years or more). The second is the earnings-related state pension, often referred to as SERPS, which is incredibly complex and from which you can 'contract out' if you are part of a workplace pension scheme.

It is so complex that it is very difficult to predict what you will get when you retire.

The two pensions are uprated according to different rules, there are complex arrangements for people who are divorced or become widowed, and there are also special arrangements for married women – based on the rather anachronistic assumption that men need a pension, whereas women simply need a husband.

To make matters worse, many pensioners

don't receive enough from the two pensions to live on, so they rely on a third system of mass means testing known as the pension credit. There are two problems with this.

First, it means that for many people it makes no sense to save for their retirement – unless you manage to save a lot, then your savings mean you get less pension credit and you find yourself no better off than the person next door who didn't bother to save a penny.

Second, many pensioners don't claim the money they are entitled to.

If you've got this far, hopefully you agree that this mess needs sorting out. In future (the Government hopes to introduce the new system in 2017), you will



Vale MP Alun Cairns reports to GEM readers

be entitled to a single state pension set above the level of the means test, currently £142.70 per week. It will be subject to: your National Insurance contributions; you have to have contributed for 7-10 years to qualify at all.

The Government believe that those who come to this country and work for just a couple of years shouldn't get a UK pension.

The state pension will be above the level of the means test, so if you do the right thing and put money aside for your retirement when

you are working, you should be better off than someone who doesn't save. Put simply, it will pay to save, just as the Government is also trying to make sure it always pays to work.

There will be credits for those who cannot pay National Insurance because of caring responsibilities.

Each individual will qualify for a pension in their own right, with no complex rules about claiming pensions based on the National Insurance contributions of a spouse.

The complex system of 'contracting out' will be abolished – if you have 'contracted out' you will pay full National Insurance contributions just like everyone else.

Existing entitlements will be recognised. If you retire in 2018 and your contributions would have entitled you to a combined pension of £160, then that's what you will get.

What about people already receiving their state pension? You may be reading this and thinking, 'They're looking after future pensioners, but what about us?'

The Government have introduced the triple lock so that the pension goes up in line with prices, earnings or

2.5 per cent, whichever is higher – there'll be no miserly 75p increase under this Government. Universal pensioner benefits are protected as promised.

The proposed single pension is higher than the current basic pension because in the long-term, people will not be entitled to large state earnings-related pensions, and because some people (those who have opted out of SERPS) will no longer pay less National Insurance. The change

will benefit those who do badly out of the current system – women and the self-employed.

At the moment, more than 10 million people aren't saving enough for their retirement. A simple, single, decent state pension coupled with the right to a workplace pension with a statutory minimum contribution from your employer will put that right.

I am pleased that these changes have been welcomed on all sides and hope that you agree.

Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D759.

● **£2,000:** 507763.
● **The rollover, which now stands at £6,500, was not won this week.**

● **£10:** 6 2 0 3 1 0
597083, 392559, 811533, 315621, 378207, 265240, 900089, 362992, 307809, 803136, 880627, 357930, 885571, 492240, 677532, 977694, 606135, 885159, 549764.

● **£5:** 746206, 586210, 709152, 752812, 323347, 558295, 360589, 568572, 269962, 773529,

142718, 454776, 409633, 663304, 682384, 898866, 417942, 744224, 676768, 721236, 507443, 811799, 391509, 228568, 618783, 829189, 317084, 473940, 732265, 804297, 112735, 320137, 967899, 378452, 697617, 290612, 534687, 294603, 851583, 778785, 273125, 429531, 505640, 728878, 209876, 127973, 147270, 153290, 195430, 469267, 626943, 133296, 946240, 650642, 513712, 595098, 376184, 193143, 131223, 364656.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information please call telephone 029 2053 2300.

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LAFARGE SHARES EXPERTISE WITH ITS COMMONWEALTH COLLEAGUES

LAFARGE'S Aberthaw works team has been sharing its expertise in cement manufacture and environmental compliance with peers from around the Commonwealth.

Through a programme organised and hosted jointly by the company and the Government's regulator, the Environment Agency, six people from the Commonwealth Fellowship Scheme have been visiting the UK.

During their visit, the 'Fellows' – from Uganda and Tanzania – gained knowledge of working relationships between industry, regulators and local communities.

Aberthaw Works' environment coordinator Jon Bailes, explained: "The aim is to give them information and training which they can apply back in their own

countries to improve industry, regulatory, and community relationships, and so improve environmental performance.

"This programme has given us an opportunity to share our experience in managing our environmental impact and enabled us to show at a practical level, how our interactions with the Environment Agency Wales support this commitment.

"It has been a real pleasure to have Rose Mero (health and safety officer, Lafarge Tanzania) and Michael Ikanut (senior environment officer, National Environment Management Authority, Uganda) on site. While the overall aim is to present our local experiences to them, we have also found it interesting to hear about the relationship between industry and regulators in their countries."



Aberthaw Works' environment coordinator Jon Bailes shows Rose Mero and Michael Ikanut how they use tyres as a fuel.

Local MP hosts Vale cadets at Westminster



Vale MP Alun Cairns (above, right) recently hosted an event for the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association at Westminster and welcomed Lt Col Guy Clarke OBE, chairman RFCA staff, Able Cadet Anja Pepper, Cadet Jack Jenkins and Cadet/Sgt Ringrose from the Vale.

Lead thieves strike in Vale

POLICE are investigating a spate of lead thefts from properties in the Vale.

Between 2pm on January 3 and 9am on January 11, a section of roof lead was removed from Atlantic College, St Donats.

Between January 9-13, lead flashing was removed from a conservatory at a house on Eagleswell Road, Llantwit Major and the property was targeted again between 10am and 4pm on Wednesday, January 16.

Llantwit Major Neighbourhood Sergeant

Nick Kihlberg said: "While the offences are not being linked, we have experienced several thefts of lead from premises in the Vale in recent weeks.

"We are appealing for any information about these incidents and want to hear from anyone who may have seen anything suspicious in the vicinity of either of properties during the times in question."

Anyone with information is asked to contact Police Sergeant Nick Kihlberg at Llantwit Major police station on 101 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

Passmores secures a top quality accolade

FOLLOWING a rigorous assessment, Passmores in Barry has secured the national Law Society's law management quality mark, Lexcel, developed specifically for the legal profession.

It is an optional, recognised accreditation scheme for law firms and in-house legal departments, which gives assurance that a practice meets high client care and business management standards.

Miss Carli Evans, Partner, said: "While we are proud to have secured Lexcel, it is our clients and staff who are the main beneficiaries.

"They can be assured that the way we manage the practice has their interests at heart and runs it efficiently.

"There is a lot of choice in the legal services market, but being Lexcel accredited demonstrates our commitment to client care and best practice."

Lucy Scott-Moncrieff, president of the Law Society of England and Wales said: "Achieving Lexcel accreditation proves a serious commitment to the continual development of the practice's

management standards. Practices opt to undertake the rigorous application and assessment process for the optional scheme to help demonstrate their investment in their business."

Passmores joins more than 1,000 other legal practices in England and Wales with Lexcel accreditation. The practice management acco-

lade has also gone international, with firms in Scotland, Poland and the Republic of Ireland having gained accreditation.

Passmores Solicitors are based at 21 Tynwydd Road, Barry, CF62 8HB; telephone 01446 721000, fax 01446 746949; website www.passmores.com; email mail@passmores.com.



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SIX NATIONS RUGBY

2013 FIXTURES



CAN ROBERT HOWLEY'S MEN RAISE THE NATION YET AGAIN?

Injury-hit Wales out to overcome the odds and grab fourth Grand Slam

THE defending title-holders, Wales, kick off the 14th Six Nations international rugby championship against Ireland at the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff, this Saturday (February 2) in search of a fourth

by **DON JOHN**

Grand Slam in the space of nine years.

In 2005, under then head coach Mike Ruddock, the Dragon suddenly emerged blinking from its cave, after long, dark years in exile, to sweep away Six Nations rivals with an exhilarating brand of running rugby, Wales

becoming the first country to claim the Grand Slam title while playing more games away than at home.

In 2008, a more defence-minded Welsh team did it again, this time under their newly-installed coach, former All Black hooker, Warren Gatland, conceding only two tries in the process.

Last year, they made it three wins in an absorbing, nail-biting tournament. They triumphed over the eventual runners-up England in a Twickenham cliff-hanger, thanks to a game-changing, individual try by centre Scott Williams.

Just as this year, the opening fixture was against the Irish, who were narrowly overcome in Dublin (23-21); and Wales then defeated Scotland in Cardiff (27-13); England (19-12 for a 20th Triple Crown); Italy (24-3); and finally France (16-9) amid ecstatic scenes in a sell-out Millennium Stadium.

While there were those who questioned the overall standard displayed in the 2012



Picture courtesy of the Huw Evans Agency.

Jubilant, as Welsh players celebrate another touchdown from last year's winning encounter with the Irish – will their arms be raised aloft again this Saturday?

tournament, it was certainly packed with plenty of drama and some genuinely memorable moments, apart from that Williams solo effort at a stunned 'Twickers'.

Who can forget arguably the try of the championship, when big Welsh wing George North powered through flailing Irish defenders, before deftly slipping a delicate, one-handed back-of-the-hand pass for centre Jonathan Davies to scythe through at the posts?

The proud men in green from the Emerald Isle will be out to avenge that narrow defeat come 1.30pm on Saturday, and disprove suggestions, after last year's humiliating defeat by England, that their ageing warriors were nearing the end of the road.

Like the Welsh, though to a lesser extent, their preparations have been hampered by the absence of injured key personnel, but they will be buoyed by the Irish provinces' success in Europe, which starkly contrasts with the four under-performing

Welsh regions, who were all eliminated early from the Heineken Cup competition.

Interim head coach, Robert Howley, who has taken on Gatland's mantle while the Kiwi is on secondment with the British & Irish Lions, will be hoping there will be no negative fall-out on Six Nations morale among his injury-hit squad, which initially contained five uncapped players, bidding to pull on the red shirt.

Both Welsh and Irish camps will need to be wary of the threat posed by a fast-rebuilding England side, still basking in their shock victory over world champs New Zealand, and harbouring Grand Slam hopes of their own.

Not forgetting, of course, the always unpredictable French, who denied Wales a deserved Rugby World Cup final place Down Under when Sam Warburton was controversially shown the red card. All three nations are eminently capable of taking the honours in what is

already shaping up to be a tightly-fought tournament with no clear favourite to claim the holy grail of northern hemisphere rugby.

Scotland, after the shock departure of their head coach, Andy Robinson, and his replacement by Wales assistant coach, Scott Johnson, will be concerned to avoid the invidious 'wooden spoon' again – while rapidly-improving Italy will be setting a trap for the unwary and hoping for one or two big scalps.

All in all, then, a particularly intriguing contest is in prospect, with all the home players fully aware that this time there is much more than a coveted Six Nations crown at stake.

The watchful Warren Gatland will be standing silently on the sidelines studying form for places on the plane when the Lions' tour party flies off to Australia in the summer... So, let battle commence!

• See Back Page Comment

SIX NATIONS SCHEDULE 2013

February 2:
WALES v Ireland, 1.30pm and
England v Scotland, 4pm

February 3:
Italy v France, 3pm

February 9:
Scotland v Italy, 2.30pm and
France v WALES, 5pm

February 10:
Ireland v England, 3pm

February 23:
Italy v WALES, 2.30pm and
England v France, 5pm

February 24:
Scotland v Ireland, 2pm

March 9:
Scotland v WALES, 2.30pm
and Ireland v France, 5pm

March 10:
England v Italy, 3pm

March 16:
Italy v Ireland, 2.30pm,
WALES v England, 5pm and
France v Scotland, 8pm

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Out and About with The GEM

Presidential biopic all talk, but still hugely engaging

MAKING a biopic of Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of America, has long been a passion project of Steven Spielberg, who originally had Liam Neeson in mind to bring 'Honest Abe' to life for him.

Schedule conflicts prevented the pair from achieving this; however, Spielberg called upon the not inconsiderable talents of Daniel Day-Lewis to fill the Neeson-size space, and their collaboration, called *Lincoln*, has now reached cinemas.

The film covers the final few months of his life, as Lincoln attempts to pass the 13th amend-

ment to the constitution which will see slaves emancipated.

However, it is a task that sees opposition come from all quarters while he must also deal with struggles in his private life, specifically his wife Mary (Sally Field) and son Robert (Joseph Gordon-Levitt)...

As much as Abraham Lincoln is revered as one of the most influential political figures in American history, so Steven Spielberg is revered as one of the most influential forces in American cinema.

That the two would go together is almost certainly fate – and much as you would expect, the end result is that *Lincoln* is a top-quality film that, while placing the emphasis on talk rather than action,



by GARETH JAMIESON

Follow Screen Talk on Twitter - @GEMScreenTalk

makes for a hugely engaging experience.

As Aaron Sorkin has shown, politicians debating the where's and why's over a table doesn't have to be the stuff of boredom, but unless there is real meat and engaging characters, it means nothing. *Lincoln* lacks in neither, making this something of a curio for Steven Spielberg.

Certainly, his hallmarks are present – a noble hero fighting the good fight, saccharine moments that other directors would be pilloried for, and father-son relationships that are the right side of 'troubled', but visually it is his most muted film for a while.

It is to the film's benefit, however, as – given the amount of dialogue and exposition, the focus needs to remain wholly on the story and charac-

ters, and Spielberg zeroes in on this beautifully – showing the true cost of constructing a legacy and the emotional and physical toll it takes, not just on those at the eye of change, but those around them as well.

Tony Kushner's script is well matched to the director, its focus on the most important period of Lincoln's presidency giving the film a thrust and dynamic a more expansive biopic would struggle to match, and he boils down the political skulduggery and machinations into an engaging screenplay.

While he shows that Abe was more than willing to bend the rules to suit him, Kushner still paints him as a saintly character, intriguing moments such as his fractious familial relationships underwritten where there should have been more.

As you might expect, Daniel Day-Lewis' central performance is mighty and powerful – anchoring the film and giving a superbly rounded performance that should almost certainly see him land the hat-trick of Best Actor Academy Awards next month.

Seeking the man behind the myth, Day-Lewis finds him and offers a mesmerising turn, equally matched by a cast that is as good onscreen as it is on paper. Sally Field shadows Day-Lewis well as

his wife Mary; Tommy Lee Jones makes use of his cantankerous persona as the firebrand Thaddeus Stevens; and David Strathairn is reliably wonderful as William Seward.

With small roles for the likes of Joseph Gordon-Levitt (underwritten sadly), John Hawkes, James Spader and Hal Holbrook, this is a sensational cast that delivers the goods.

The only minuses lie in the fact that it often becomes a little too heavy-going at times, with a good knowledge of the background of the period more than useful, while Spielberg's tendency to use schmalz prevents the film digging deeper into darker territory. However, if you enjoy political history, then *Lincoln* will make for a hugely engaging watch.

VERDICT: Weighty and with the emphasis on discourse rather than action, *Lincoln* is a heavy-going biopic that is marshalled with skill by Steven Spielberg and led by an astounding performance by Daniel Day-Lewis.

Its emphasis on talking heads may not appeal to all, but it is certainly an immersive and engaging experience. *Recommended.*

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *Nixon* (1995), *Amistad* (1997), *Glory* (1989).

Vale author's book launch in London

ELIZABETH GLANVILLE, originally from the Vale, will be launching her first novel, *The Imaginist*, with fellow novelist Fiona McCready – author of *Patchwork* – in Camden on February 21 at Collective Pop Up.

Elizabeth grew up in Peterston-super-Ely, where she attended the local primary school before moving on to Bishop of Llandaff High School, and then Cambridge University.

As an undergraduate student, Elizabeth worked in The Sportsmans' Rest and The Three Horse Shoes in Peterston.

She also worked as a playworker in the after school club at Peterston School, and on the



Vale's summer playscheme in Barry and Llantwit Major.

She now lives in London, but her family is based in Pendoylan.

She spent the past three years working on *The Imaginist*, alongside teaching and working towards an MA in psychotherapy and counselling.

The Imaginist, which was long listed for the inaugural Sony Reader Award in collaboration

with The Dylan Thomas Prize, tells the story of Louise, who moves to London in search of the long coveted young professional lifestyle, but finds the cold realities of real life harsher than she ever imagined.

Elizabeth (28) said: "I started writing novels nearly five years ago, so to finally have *The Imaginist* in print is just incredible."

"Although the launch is in London, I would love to bring *The Imaginist* home and do a signing in the Vale as well, and this is something I will be looking into for later in the year."

The launch event will be held at Collective Pop Up, 4 Crowndale Road, London, NW1 1TT, which is located a few minutes walk from Mornington Crescent station, five minutes from Camden Town.

WHAT'S ON AND WHERE AROUND THE LOCAL AREA

Local history

meeting COWBRIDGE and District Local History Society's next lecture will be on Friday, February 1, at 7.30pm in the Lesser Hall of the Town Hall, Cowbridge.

The subject will be the 'History of the Mumbles Lifeboat' by Sid Wilkins (a former lifeboatman). All are welcome!

Church crafts

A previously postponed craft fayre at St Mary's Church, Barry, will be held this coming Saturday (February 2) at 10.30am.

Following the Christmas tree festival, which was visited by hundreds of schoolchildren just before Christmas, a donation of £300 was made to Ty Hapus.

Toys and trains

BARRY toy and train sale will take place on Sunday, February 3, 10.30am to 3pm in Barry Leisure Centre, Greenwood Street.

The Barry show has 80 tables and is attended by stallholders from all over Wales, as well as England.

Organiser Chris Dyer said: "The traders are keen to offer the best possible stock but also at the best possible prices and value-for-money will always be the keynote."

For information, telephone 01643 702757, 07966 694579 or go to website www.chrisdyer-fairs.co.uk.

TOP help

TAX HELP for Older People (TOP) will hold an income tax surgery at Roz Couzen's Chiropody Surgery, Unit 4, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major, CF61 1RB from 10am until midday on February 4.

Future tax surgeries will then be held there on the first Monday in each month. No appointment is necessary.

To call TOP's helpline, telephone 0845 601 3321 or 01308 488066. Home visits can be arranged for people unable to attend the surgery.

Llantwit concert

THE Cowbridge U3A

live music group presents a concert of music with a spring theme, on February 6 at 2.30pm.

It features Anne Wilkins (soprano), James Barton (violin) and Jeanette Massocchi (piano) with music by Beethoven, Handel, etc.

The concert venue is at Bethel Chapel, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major, and all are welcome; no ticket required.

Family album

ON February 7, Cowbridge Art Society will welcome Neath artist Paul Rees, who will give a presentation of his work and demonstrate making paintings from the family album; this is a change to the advertised programme.

The society meets on Thursday evenings at the Old Hall, Cowbridge, 7pm-9pm. Visitors welcome.

For full programme, see www.cowbridgeartsociety.com

Charity function

LLANTWIT MAJOR Rugby Football Club is holding a meal night in aid of Tenovus, with guest speaker and a question and answer session on Thursday, March 14, before the Wales v England Six Nations match.

Appearing during the evening are *Scrum V's* Phil Steele, former Wales union and league international Adrian Hadley, and Ospreys Rhys Webb and Matthew Morgan.

Tickets £15, can be booked at the clubhouse after 4pm on 01446 702276, alternatively

call 07900 020152.

Pothole fillers at the ready!

WITH the recent snow, ice and flooding across the Vale creating a huge new batch of potholes across the county, the BIG Fill team rolled into Baruc ward last weekend to begin phase 2 of the Vale Council's campaign, filling 129m² of potholes in just one day, using 12.5 tonnes of tarmac.

This weekend, the team will be in Gibbonsdown, and the following weekend, February 9 and 10, the team is heading to Llantwit Major.

Talks on CS Lewis

AUTHOR CS Lewis, best known for his Narnia series of children's books, was also a prolific writer on Christianity.

To mark the 50th anniversary of his death, Rev Dr Mark Dimond of All Saints church, Penarth, is hosting a Lent talk and discussion series based on Lewis' Christian writings.

The four talks begin on February 20 on the gallery inside All Saints, with sessions at either 12pm-2pm (bring packed lunch) or 7.30pm-9pm.

Topics are as follows: February 20, 'Pain'; February 27, 'Joy'; March 6, 'Salvation'; March 13, 'Love'.

Admission is free, with tea and coffee available. All are welcome.

For more information, visit www.all-saintspenarth.org.uk

Vale hedge trimming competition

The Glamorgan Ploughing and Hedging Society will be holding its annual tractor and mechanical hedge trimming competition on Sunday, February 17, at Ty Draw Farm, St Athan, at 10.30am, by permission of Mr David Lowe.

The winner will receive the Perpetual Nigel Sullivan Shield and there will be cash prizes for places.

The society will hold its annual ploughing

match on Sunday, September 8, at Gileston Farm, St Athan, by kind permission of RM Thomas and Son.

The Fergusson Club, which has worldwide membership, will be using the event to stage the European Fergusson T20 Championship to commemorate the life of the late Harry Fergusson, who designed the 'Little Grey Ferry' in 1935; in 1956, production went over to the Massey Fergusson 35 tractor.

More information from the chairman, Andrew Studley on 01446 781229.

Bobath gala concert perfect Valentine's gift

BOBATH children's therapy centre is celebrating its 21st birthday this year with a gala concert at St David's Hall, Cardiff on March 17.

"With songs from the shows as well as comedy and dancing, this variety concert really does have something for everyone and would be make a perfect Mother's Day or Valentine's Gift," a spokesman said.

Acts include baritone, Lukasz Biela, comedian Mike Doyle, Peter Karrie, Sarah Lark and Katy Treharne, Californian folk from Zervas & Pepper, dancing from the renowned Dawnsyr Nant Garw and the Debbie Chapman Dancers, plus the Symphonic Brass Wales and a massed choir.

The concert will feature music from *Phantom of the Opera*,

Les Misérables and much more. Hosts include Arfon Haines-Davies, Connie Fisher, Angharad Mair, Roy Noble, Margaret Williams and Lucy and Rhodri Owen. Tickets, priced at £12-£18, can be bought on the St David's Hall website, concessions are available.

Other Bobath events include the annual birthday ball on Friday, July 12 in the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

The charity is asking supporters to 'dig deep' to help raise money during this milestone year by taking part in fundraising activities, including baking for Bobath, cake sales, raffles, promise auctions, car boot sales, coffee mornings and dance marathons.

Contact the charity team on fundraising@bobath-wales.org, call 02920 522600 or visit www.bobathwales.org.

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Vale pub trade recovers following recent snow

HEAVY snowfalls recently proved a headache for Vale pubs and restaurants, as people thought hard about whether to venture out in the cold, icy conditions for a meal or a drink.

But by last weekend, with rain washing away

the last of the snow, landlords were reporting a welcome return to normal business.

The Six Bells in the village of Penmark suffered during the snowy period, with people reluctant to negotiate the tight country lanes leading to it.

Joint-owner, James Barnsley, explained: "It was like a ghost town – at

by **TIM CHAPMAN**

one stage we were out in the car park throwing snowballs at each other!

"The seven-day period with the snow cost us a fortune.

"There was a standstill in the village. On one day alone, a total of 62 diners cancelled.

"A 40th birthday in the function room was cancelled too – everything had been delivered.

"It was nobody's fault and we've honoured the deposit so the client can book another date in February.

"With the staff, I said if you think you can get here safely, come in to work, but if not don't bother."

James emphasised: "During a period with snow you still have all the overheads of running the business."

The Six Bells had had a hectic two week period until the deluge of snow – James is now looking forward to a return of that busy trade with the next special event, St Valentine's evenings on February 14 and 15.

A few hardy souls managed to get to The Highwaysman on the outskirts of Rhosce.

Derek Gaynor

explained: "Our lunchtime special is usually very popular, giving us a vibrant mid-day trade, but because of the weather we did lose some business.

"A few of our loyal customers did endeavour to get here.

"Last Thursday evening (January 24) was our first busy night for a week and Friday lunchtime showed a real pickup, and that we were back to normal."

The Glenbrook Inn, owned by the O'Leary

family is located in a residential area of Barry.

Liam O'Leary said there were a number of forthcoming events which would swiftly draw customers back.

"It tends to be the village pubs that suffer more in bad weather than those in towns.

"The next few weeks will be busy because the Six Nations is starting and St Valentine's Day is a boost – ours is scheduled for February 15 because that is a Friday."

Councillor makes appeal on budget

ONE of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Independent members has asked for a meeting with officers to discuss next year's council budget.

Coun Richard Bertin has asked for a meeting to be arranged with the independent team to discuss what service cuts and job losses will have to be made as a consequence of the Central Government's austerity programme.

The authority is

expected to save several millions over the next four years which means some services are likely to be cut.

Coun Bertin says it is important that everyone works together on this to ensure we get the best for the citizens of Barry and the Vale.

Coun Bertin, who represents Barry Court ward, said: "We need time to analyse the proposals as this budget is going to be like no other. It is therefore important that we, as independents, have an input in the budget which will be debated in March."

West End 'super farce' comes to Millennium Centre

If you think that the term 'Commedia dell'Arte' is the new special at selected branches of Jamie's Italian, then think again.

The rather fancy term, translated as 'comedy of the guild' instead is the genre best exemplified at present by *One Man, Two Guvnors*, the stage comedy that gave James Corden Broadway success, and the show recently landed at the Wales Millennium Centre for a five-day engagement.

The story, set in Brighton in 1963, sees Francis Henshall (played in Cardiff by Corden's understudy Owain Arthur) find himself caught up in a farce when he becomes beholden to two 'guvnors', and tries to keep both happy, while making sure neither finds out about the other; all the more intriguing when the two 'guvnors' in question are themselves linked...

The success of James Corden in the lead role of Francis in the West End and Broadway has

by **GARETH JAMIESON**

created something of a conundrum in terms of any other actors approaching the character – something that Owain Arthur was no doubt more than aware of prior to embarking on the Welsh leg of this tour.

However, his performance, full of manic energy, excellent comedy timing and an attention to detail that pays off greatly, is the spark that ignites Richard Bean's hilarious farcical comedy, resulting in a truly memorable experience.

You can see glimpses of why Corden was such a triumph, but at the same time, Arthur offers something different in Henshall, and not just the addition of a few nods to his strong Welsh accent!

The template of the comedy asks the lead to be on his toes for the duration of the play, and Arthur brings a wonderful physicality to the performance as a man always trying to stay one step ahead and only just managing it.

Fans of farce and the

comedy of errors will delight in this play, while those less moved by it will slowly be drawn in by the quick-fire nature of the jokes (both verbal and visual) and the wonderful performances.

There are frequent non-sequiturs, asides to the audience that break the fourth wall, and the odd moment of audience interaction that gives the play a pleasing sense of levity without becoming too pantomime.

Alongside Arthur there are a number of wonderful turns, from Edward Bennett and Rosie Wyatt as the 'guvnors' of the title, to Leon Williams' amusing turn as affected actor Alan Dangle – in fact, there isn't a weak performance among the cast, who all execute the delivery of the play with stylish aplomb.

One Man Two Guvnors is a play well worth catching, and those lucky enough to have seen it during its run at the WMC will no doubt share that sentiment – a hilarious night out is guaranteed!

New proprietors Paul Bullock and award-winning French chef, Cyril Royer (already known to Vale diners), arrived in December, acquainted themselves with their regular customers and now are delighted to launch their full schedule of popular favourites...

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"his and hers" valentine's menu

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your menu

Pre starter: Home chorizo and prawn lollies, homecured salmon in beetroot wasabi yogurt.

hers starters

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Rustic home-made coarse local rilette of pork, pickled onion puree and an onion crusty roll with piccalilli

mains

Crab, lemon grass and French clam ravioli, Roasted butternut squash infused in pea veloute drizzled with parmesan oil and a purple basil

Steak and kidney suet pudding, seasonal vegetables and salsify braised in red wine liquor

dessert

Cold strawberry and lime soufflé with a honeycomb biscuit

Banana and chocolate butter pudding whiskey with an orange custard

to finish

Pistachio truffles

An alternative vegetarian option is available

£21.95 per person

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3 Course
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Smoked Salmon on Pickled Cucumber
with dill and chive crème fraîche

Seared Scallops
with parsnip purée, petite salad, parsnip ribbons and walnut dressing

Breaded Beetroot (v)
on dressed rocket with cream cheese and chive dip

Barnsley Lamb Chop with honey chantenay carrots,
pea and fresh mint purée, new potatoes, port jus

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Visit the Website for our new menus and latest updates:

Valentine's Day Dining

Savour that so sensuous quality of dining out on Valentine's Day!

THE approach of Valentine's Day is often a nervous time for both men and women – because an all-important choice has to be made – how to celebrate in style?

It is a relatively easy decision for some – in particular, a couple who have an established relationship, with several years under their belts.

By now (*touch wood!*) they should know what works for them. They will have made a few mistakes and can, all being well, look back and smile...

For the newer relationship, however, it is a little like putting on a blindfold and setting off into a minefield!

In theory, in these modern times of gender equality, a couple should be able to arrive at a joint decision, but life is rarely that simple!

By a process that is hard to chart or quantify, one half of the duo will generally end up making the final choice.

It will be 'his choice' – or 'her choice' – and he or she will have to face the music afterwards! Considering the options, by far

the most popular one is choosing to dine out – and this does have so many advantages.

First, both here in the Vale and in Bridgend county boroughs, there are just so many different places to eat – and so many different styles of cooking to choose from.

After all, there can be few places as cosy and comforting as a country inn on a cold night in February, sitting in front of a real fire, as you browse the menu, and then settling down for a great meal.

What is more, the simple law of competition and survival of the fittest ensures that standards stay high.

Restaurateurs will pitch their menus at different niches in the market, from *cordon bleu* to simple and wholesome, but at a time of austerity, each knows they must deliver the goods, or diners will just go elsewhere.

That perfect Valentine's experience doesn't have to be confined to an intimate setting in the country, of course... In towns such as Barry, Cowbridge, Penarth, Llantwit Major, Bridgend or Porthcawl, there is a wealth of venues available.

You can choose a smart modern brasserie, or somewhere serving tapas, or take your choice from a huge range of national cuisines now being offered in the area.

The days when the 'exotic' choice consisted of Italian, Indian or Chinese have long gone!

Town-based restaurants, of course, offer the added attraction of extending the evening by heading for a popular nightspot – whether that be a pub, club or disco.

(CONTINUED
ON PAGE 19)

Da Gennaro RISTORANTE ITALIANO

New Lunch Menu

Italian Omelette - Cheese & Ham

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Valentine's Day Dining



Let a chef take the cooking strain on special day of love!

(CONTINUED
FROM PAGE 18)

Some couples may want to push the boat out and dine in a smart restaurant, where they can enjoy wine and liqueurs with a leisurely meal before retiring to a pre-booked hotel suite.

As befits a proud Frenchman, TV chef Jean-Christophe Novelli is well aware that dining out should, above all, be a sensual experience.

In a recent interview, he said: "Ahh, food can be very sexy but it's definitely not enough on its own to seduce a woman - you need to have that special connection."

He wasn't actually offering any seduction tips. In fact, he has (surprise) a book to sell, offering some sensual and romantic recipes for couple to cook at home!

However, he had to admit: "Many men tend to try to over-impress if they cook for a woman, and it often ends in disaster."

"Women also can try too hard to make an over-elaborate dish, which is tiring to prepare and then they are hardly likely to be in the mood for romance, after all that effort."

These are astute observations that point to one obvious solution - eating out and avoiding a romantic disaster.

For the record, the multi-Michelin-

starred chef has gathered together his recipes in a new book, *Everyday Novelli*.

So, here is one recipe - a fast, sensuous dessert that you can prepare and leave in the fridge for one last treat before the evening is over!

ICED WHITE CHOCOLATE WITH WHISKY.

Serves 6-12 (so there's plenty left over for other romantic occasions!)

Prep time: five minutes. Freezer time: one hour.

Ingredients:

200g white chocolate;
20ml whisky, chilled;
180ml double cream, chilled.

Break the chocolate into very small pieces. Put a non-stick saucepan on a low heat until just warm. Remove from the heat.

Add the white chocolate and stir with a wooden spoon so that the chocolate melts very slowly.

Add the whisky and double cream straight from the fridge. Continue stirring until slight ribbons form.

Pour into an ice-cube tray or ice-lolly moulds and freeze for at least one hour.

PHILIP IRWIN

the WENVOE ARMS



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9th February - 'Morning Wood'

16th February - '617'

23rd February - 'Too Toned'

Ashaa's Night 3

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Council looks at future of schools with low numbers

MEMBERS of the lifelong learning scrutiny committee have been presented with options for the future of primary and secondary schools in the Vale – as the Welsh Government urges councils to tackle the issue of schools that have low pupil numbers.

However, the recommendations were classed as financially sensitive, so they have not yet been made public, and the committee discussed them behind closed doors when the meeting took place last Monday (January 21).

A Schools Review Group, made up of five councillors: Nic Hodges (Plaid); Rhianon Birch (Labour); Howard Hamilton (Labour); Bob Penrose (Independent) and Eddie Williams (Llantwit Major First Independent) has been looking at the issue.

Although their brief has not been made public, similar studies have looked at schools that have unfilled places, and at the possibility of merging schools that have low pupil numbers.

A report that was made public at the scrutiny meeting quoted Estyn, the Welsh Government school inspection body, which has estimated that the cost of surplus places is £260 per primary place and £510 per secondary place.

The committee was told that

by PHILIP IRWIN

the School Places Review Group was convened between September and December 2012, and built on the work of previous member working groups to consider pupil and school data and determine if the current configuration of schools meets the educational needs of children in the Vale in the 21st century.

It was stated that one of the statutory functions of a local authority is to ensure that there are sufficient places for all pupils, and that there are the right numbers of schools of the right type and size, and in the right locations, to fully and efficiently meet the needs of the pupil population.

The Estyn report asked how surplus places affect the resources available for expenditure on improving outcomes for pupils. It says that reductions in surplus places result in better resource management and impact on school improvement, and that local authorities should retain no more than 10 per cent surplus places across primary and secondary schools.

Leighton Andrews, Minister for Education and Skills, issued a statement to cabinet education members across Wales on highlighting the principal priority of the current Welsh Government of improving school standards.

The central theme of the minister's statement is the reduction of the number of surplus places, as

this represents a drain on resources.

The fact that a reorganisation is on the way was confirmed by the Vale Council cabinet member for children's services, Coun Chris Elmore, who said: "I am planning to present proposals to Cabinet on March 4, setting out proposals to ensure that we have the right schools in the right places for the future."

"The proposals, which will take into account the advice of the lifelong learning scrutiny committee's School Places Review Group, will involve a number of changes affecting several schools across the Vale."

"Following consideration by cabinet, the proposals will be the subject of extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders in the following weeks."

Vale MP Alun Cairns said: "I'm concerned by the rumours that some primary schools in the Vale are facing closure. The Vale has some of the best schools for our children and I'm worried that several are potentially at risk."

"The schools in some of the areas that have been mentioned to me are exceptionally important and play a central part in their local communities. They include Barry and the rural Vale."

"I'm determined to do everything I can to support parents, pupils, teachers and school governors in the areas concerned, and would encourage those affected to get in touch."

New community centre for Barry



Looking at plans for the new community centre at Alexandra Crescent in Barry with representatives from contractors Jehu are John Mudford (Alexandra Gardens Community Association secretary), Coun Gwyn John (Vale Council cabinet member for leisure, parks, culture and sport development), and Coun Stuart Egan (Vale Council Deputy Leader).

WORK has officially started on the building of a brand new and improved community centre at Alexandra Crescent in Barry.

A much-loved community centre had stood at the site for over 60 years after being built by volunteers in 1947, but had to close its doors in September 2011 after becoming structurally unsafe.

Passionate volunteers have since worked tirelessly to apply for funding to build a new community centre, and their efforts have paid off with the new centre set to be completed by early May, depending on weather conditions.

Funding was obtained from the Vale Council and a Barry Regeneration Grant from the Welsh Government.

Local contractors Jehu will be carrying out the works, and Alexandra Gardens Community Association secretary John Mudford, said: "We can't

wait to move back into the brand new centre. I hope that the local community will continue to help and support the new community centre and that it will be enjoyed by local people for as many years, or even longer, than its predecessor."

Siân Vaughan, the Vale Council's community development officer, said: "It's great news that work has begun on the site. The community association have been right at the heart of the plans for the new centre, with John and other dedicated volunteers putting in many hours completing the various grant forms that were required to obtain funding." The Vale Council owns 22 community centres across the county, all of which are run by volunteers.

If you'd like to get involved with your local community centre, contact Siân Vaughan on 01446 704813. Further information can also be found online at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Slimming groups help homeless centre

HOMELESS shelters across the country say they're helping more people than ever as temperatures plummet to below zero.

Local Slimming World groups in Rhose and Llantwit Major have donated over four black bags of food for the Huggard Centre in Cardiff.

Consultant Helen said: "Every year my members very kindly donate food for the Huggard Centre."

"Huggard is a registered charity which relies on donations, and just the fact that by donating this food we will have helped people who need it, is amazing."

Helen added: "At present, the centre is looking after approximately 70 people every day, so you can imagine how much food they need."

"The Huggard Centre also require donations of clothes, especially waterproof clothes, so if anyone out there is able to contribute in any way you can contact the centre on 02920 642000."

If you would like any details on Helen's groups, contact her on 01446 750738.

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Merched y Wawr's Commons insight



The group with the Vale MP following his Commons talk.

VALE MP Alun Cairns recently met members of Merched y Wawr, Cowbridge, at their regular monthly meeting.

He was invited to talk to the members about his role as an MP and shared details of his life at Westminster and the House of Commons during a typical working week.

Mr Cairns said: "It was a pleasure to meet and chat with the Merched y Wawr members in Cowbridge about my role and life in the day of an MP in Westminster."

"I was delighted to accept Mary Crandon's invitation to join the group at their monthly meeting. Merched y Wawr are a terrific organisation, who now have over 280 branches across Wales – providing a social network and

support for their local communities for women, by women, through the medium of Welsh."

Merched y Wawr y Bontfaen yn croesawi'r Aelod Seneddol lleol

YMUNODD yr Aelod Seneddol Alun Cairns ac aelodau Merched y Wawr y Bontfaen yn ei cyfarfod misol.

Gwahoddwyd Aelod Seneddol y Fro i siarad â'r grŵp am ei amser yn San

Steffan, i ddisgrifio ei swyddogaethau ond hefyd i rannu weithiau a ffeithiau digri am weithio yn Nhy'r Cyffredin.

Dwedodd Mr Cairns: "Roedd yn bleser imi cael y cyfle i siarad ac aelodau Merched y Wawr Y Bontfaen am fy swydd fel Aelod Seneddol yr ardal, a'r hyn sy'n digwydd ar ddiwrnod arferol (os oes yna siwd beth!) yn San Steffan."

"Roeddwn yn falch iawn i dderbyn gwahoddiad Mary Crandon, Llywydd cangen y Bontfaen, i ymuno a'i cyfarfod misol. Mae Merched y Wawr yn sefydliad hynod, sydd erbyn hyn a dros 280 o ganghennau ledled Cymru – yn darparu rhwydwaith cymwynasgar yn y gymuned gan ac i ferched trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg."

LOCAL COMPANY PICKS UP ANOTHER TOP AWARD

LOCAL landscaping company NP Garden & Landscaping Services Ltd is celebrating for the second year running – after winning another award for their landscaping services.

They collected their award – the best engineering achievement for a landscaping project – at the Marshalls annual award ceremony on Tuesday, January 15.

The job involved excavating and removing more than 100 tons of earth, and then building complex retaining walls, with drainage.

The work also involved building natural stone walls incorporating a modern water feature, along with construction of new natural stone steps and patio areas.

A company spokesman said: "This is the second year running we have won awards for our work, after winning the 'best patio installation' award last year."

The winning projects were picked from applicants from the south west of England and Wales, and were judged on design, construction detailing and quality of

workmanship.

NP Garden & Landscaping Services Ltd specialise in garden and driveway makeovers, and has now been established for more than 12 years.

The company has also recently become a member of both the Government-approved trustmark scheme, and the association of professional landscapers.



Nick Palmer (centre) receives the award from Carrie and Mark of Marshalls, the sponsors.



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Adam's 'starter for ten on' University Challenge TV show



LEFT: Adam (far left) pictured with his Bangor teammates on the TV show.

A BARRY-bred university student was part of the victorious Bangor team which defeated Durham this week on the BBC TV quiz University Challenge.

Bangor is flying the Welsh flag as the last university from Wales left in the competition, and Adam Pearce is one of its team members.

Adam (25) attended the Welsh medium school Ysgol Sant Baruc in the town, before going on to Ysgol Gyfun Glantaf in Cardiff – it was before the Vale had its own Welsh medium secondary school in Barry.

Adam is currently studying for a PhD in translation studies at Bangor University in north Wales.

He explained that there was strong competition just to get on the team.

"There were more than 100 students who competed for a place in the Bangor team, so I feel privileged to be a member.

"The team then had to go through a rigorous selection process even to get on TV – there were several rounds of questioning, both in Bangor, and at the ITV studios in Manchester where filming takes place."

One question put to the teams

concerned two Pontypridd brothers and which song they had written.

First on the button was Adam with the answer that it was the Welsh national anthem.

Questionmaster Jeremy Paxman commented: "If you'd got that wrong, they would have never let you go home!"

Although he has exchanged south for north Wales, Adam said there was one strong comparison.

"I do sometimes miss home in Barry, but the great thing about Bangor is that we're by the sea here, as well!"

Barry's winter wonderland

by MATTHEW MORGAN



LOCAL photographer Matthew Morgan captured these snowy scenes during the recent bout of cold weather. As usual, the rule seems to be that the youngsters love it, while for the adults it's all a bit of a chore.

CARE FORUM GROUP LAUNCHED

A NEW group is being launched to support vulnerable adults with complex mental health needs in Bridgend and the Vale.

Care Forum Wales is setting up the special interest group to "drive up standards and give providers a unified voice" and a prime mover is trained psychiatric nurse Michelle Martin, whose company runs five specialist care homes in south Wales.

A spokesman said the aim is to look after the interest of young adults, between the ages of 18 and 65.

Care Forum Wales

Policy Officer Melanie Minty believes the creation of the new group specialising in the needs of younger adults will be an important development: "Most of the focus of society seems to be on children or the elderly, yet it is an area of increasing impact through drugs and alcohol misuse. We believe it is essential to represent the whole spectrum of social care needs in Wales."

For more information, contact 077399 70180 or though Care Forum on 07969 489290 or 01873 880816 or email melanie@careforumwales.co.uk.

Devastation caused by Tasmanian bush fires



LEFT: Bush fires have left a trail of destruction.

LAST week, The GEM told the thrilling story of how a young woman on an exchange visit between the Vale and Australia took supplies out to people on a Tasmanian peninsula because they were threatened by bush fires.

Leanne Martlew (27) jet-skied 70 kilometres along the coast to deliver drinks and food to people who were waiting to be evacuated by boats.

Leanne has sent this photograph of a burnt out bus and scorched vegetation, illustrating the destruction caused by the fires in Tasmania earlier this month.

'TOWN NEEDS MORE PARKING'

WE moved to Wales in 1970, when our factory came to Bridgend under the WDA scheme.

Not knowing the area, we were delighted when we found Cowbridge – a delightful market town full of small shops selling local produce and staffed by friendly, welcoming people.

Unfortunately, many of those small shops have gone and those remaining are struggling as there is limited parking.

The Town Hall car park is full very early in the morning, more so since Waitrose opened. People from

Llanblethian and surrounding villages need to use cars and if living on their own, find the personal contact with people they know comforting.

So when will the Vale Council realise the town will die if more parking is not provided?

Mrs Jean Dale, Cowbridge.

'Love thy neighbour' urges Barry councillor

A Barry councillor has appealed to people in the Vale to keep a particular eye on vulnerable neighbours during periods of severe weather.

Coun Richard Bertin, chair of the local authority's social care committee, said: "I am fully aware of the problems the vulnerable people face during adverse

weather. Not only do motorists suffer through the snow, but so do those with heart and respiratory problems.

"These people find it hard in the cold due to these problems.

"Councils such as the Vale of Glamorgan are geared up and doing their bit to help the most vulnerable. They have 4 x 4 vehicles with social work teams out and about visiting the community."

Coun Bertin said social services would appreciate the public being vigilant if they had a neighbour who might need help.

"Social work teams also would like you to act as their eyes and ears and let the council know of anyone facing difficulty. People can call the Vale's Social Care team on 01446 7001."

Guides in store

ON Saturday, February 2, the 1st Llandough Guides will join forces with volunteers from Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern for a fundraising event at Morrisons, Cardiff Bay.

As part of the community action section of the Guide programme, the girls will be bagpacking from 10am -3pm.

There will also be a display in store with further information on Guiding in Dinas Powys and Llandough as well as details of the help available from DPVC.

For further information contact Llandoughguides@googlemail.com.

ASBO for horse trader's son

A HORSE trader's son has been given an ASBO after a Vale Council investigation

Thomas Hope Price, son of Tom Price (senior), has received an interim Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), after continued issues of fly-grazing and straying horses in the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend county borough.

Thomas Hope Price, of Glamorgan Horse Traders Ltd, received the interim ASBO on Tuesday, January 28, 2013, following "excellent partnership between the Vale of Glamorgan Trading Standards Department, Bridgend Trading Standards and South Wales Police".

The principal trading standards officer for the Vale Council, Christina Roberts-Kinsey, said: "We will continue to work on tackling these issues and I hope the introduction of the conditions will address any remaining problems in the area."

"The order has been made in the same terms as the order relating to Mr Tom Price (senior); namely that both individuals must not allow animals owned by them, or under their care or control, to stray on the highway, and also from keeping horses on land with-



Thomas Hope Price.

out a valid written legal agreement of the landowner.

"They have also been prevented from selling, or transferring ownership, of a horse which is not correctly identified, where the details have not been updated with his ownership details."

The Superintendent and Police Commander for Bridgend and the Vale of Glamorgan, Paul James, said: "This is another example of positive partnership working to resolve issues faced within the Vale and Bridgend county borough."

"This ASBO demonstrates that police, along with our partner agencies, are tackling anti-social behaviour within our communities and are getting tougher on those who display this type of behaviour."

"A breach of this Anti-Social Behaviour Order carries serious penalties. The community's help in letting us know when these orders are broken is vital to their success."

Penarth trees will be trimmed

THE Vale Council's parks and ground maintenance team will begin planned tree works in the Penarth Escarpment, Paget Hill and Portway area on February 4.

These will continue through until March 28, to improve woodland management and cut overhanging trees in the vicinity.

"The team will remove branches overhanging onto pavements, car parks and play areas, while tree thinning and removal will also be undertaken by the team to reduce encroachment," a spokeswoman said.

"Traffic controls will be in place on Paget Road Hill while work is ongoing. All planned work is dependent upon weather and ground conditions."



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Council 'flood room' was at the ready as thaw followed freeze

THE Vale Council's emergency planning team set up a special 'flood room' at the weekend, in response to problems caused by

flooding across the Vale of Glamorgan.

As the snow thawed and heavy rain was forecast for the area, the team liaised with visible services, the council's contact centre (C1V), public pro-

tection and communications departments, as well as the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

In the early hours of Saturday morning, the team delivered sandbags to residents in Llandow village, High Street, Cowbridge, and Tyler House Close in Llanmaes.

In Cowbridge, High Street was temporarily closed on Saturday morning and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service was in attendance. Drains in Westgate were unblocked and diverted to a culvert.

The fire service also attended properties at Thaw Close in Rhosne, and St Mary Hill.

BUGSY MALONE

BUGSY MALONE is being performed at St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, Argae Lane, Barry, on February 5, 6 and 7 at 7pm.

Ticket prices £6 adults and £4 concessions, available from the school's reception; telephone 01446 729250.

Sandbags were placed in these locations and light portable pumps were used to tackle flooding.

Signage was placed on a number of other flooded roads across the Vale.

The Vale's gritting crews were deployed as road temperatures were set to drop in the early hours of Saturday morning with a risk of ice.

The team continued to monitor the situation during the weekend, responding to calls from residents.

Readers' snow snaps



Susan Borges sent this photo of Eleri, Cerys and Elin in Barry.



Michelle, from local company 2012 Flooring, sent this photo of her rabbit taking a fancy to the snowman's parsnip nose!

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'Flying Start' spreads wings

TOTS in the most deprived areas of the Vale will get a better start in life, thanks to the expansion of a council-run project.

The Flying Start programme, funded by the Welsh Government, is already working in Gibbonsdown and Cadoxton to improve the development, health and wellbeing of children under four.

With the scheme set to double in size over the next two years, the team will soon be winging its way into more communities across the Vale in 2013.

From April, Flying Start will be working with families in the Castleland area of Barry.

The Vale Council's Flying Start programme expansion manager, Antonia Bridges, said: "I am delighted to announce the expansion of Flying Start into the Castleland area of Barry from April."

"We currently work in Gibbonsdown and Cadoxton areas but will be doubling in size over the next two years and be able to offer a service to 1,200 children. The aim of the project is to improve a child's development, health and well being in preparation for school, giving them a better start in life."

For more information, contact Flying Start on 01446 723180 or you can email: flyingstart@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

News from the NFU Vale Ladies

NFU Vale of Glamorgan Ladies followed up a nine lesson carol service at Penllyn church on January 15 when the annual dinner was held at The Grove Golf Club, Porthcawl for 40 members.

A vote of thanks went to Elizabeth Jervis and Ann Rees from Ray Evans for organising the event.

The NFU Vale Ladies meet monthly and are mostly farmers' wives. New members are always welcome.

The next meeting is on February 19 at 7.30pm at Penllyn village hall when the speaker, Rebecca Exley, will give a talk on the Physic Garden in Cowbridge. JS

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Giant hailstones cause chaos on M4 near Bridgend



ABOVE: Traffic heading east on the M4 has come to a stop as emergency services deal with the crash.

RIGHT: : Looking back towards Port Talbot, traffic heading east has come to a stop, with two cars caught on the crash barrier. Meanwhile, in the distance, two cars heading west have stopped in the fast lane after an incident.

HAILSTONES brought chaos to the M4 last Sunday (January 27) and 11 motorists were reported to be injured – although none seriously.

Worst affected was the M4 between Pyle and Margam, and GEM photographer Keith E Morgan happened to be passing just after traffic ground to a halt. at 12.35pm

From where he stood, on a bridge over the motorway, it was possible to see three separate accidents – two heading east towards Bridgend, and another in the opposite direction.

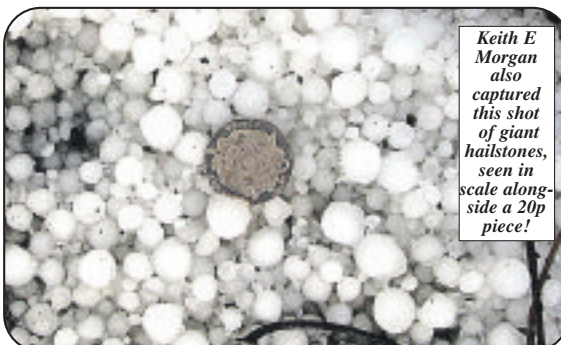
It was reported that, 30 minutes later, a car left the road between junction 34 and 35, while a similar incident took place between Sarn and Pyle.

Did you know you can find The GEM on Twitter and Facebook? Follow us @gem_news or 'friend' us at: facebook.com /gemnews

PHOTOGRAPHS by KEITH E MORGAN



ABOVE: One of the cars in the east-bound crash.



Keith E Morgan also captured this shot of giant hailstones, seen in scale alongside a 20p piece!

'The rural team has done good work, but not with Perfect Pitch'

I AM writing in response to the accusation that I am a "short-sighted: camp site owner."

I read with great interest The GEM letter of January 24 from Annette Chinn MD of Task Force, and would like to point out a few things that the public and business owners of the Vale are unaware of.

As Task Force is one of the local businesses that we promote in the arrival pack we give to visitors, I am a little surprised at the 'I'm alright Jack!' attitude.

I have never said I was not grateful for the support of the European funding we received, or that the Creative Rural Communities (CRC) team had not done good work.

However, the Perfect Pitch project was outside of their remit and, instead, caused distress and damage to existing businesses and local residents.

I wonder if Annette would be as supportive of the CRC team if, after applying for her grant, they took her intellectual property and used the information gleaned to then canvas six local land owners, pay for them to set up in competition to Task Force (in this time of economic recession) and then push inappropriate planning applications through, so that her business was forever reduced.

In addition, how would she feel if they then erected huge blue AA signs throughout the Vale, directing traffic away from Task

Force and displacing business to these new sites? Now, rather than one or two going for planning, the CRC team are talking with the other sites, offering them the branding and website to promote the Perfect Pitch brand on an ongoing basis, causing us even more long-term harm.

Addressing Annette's point on 'appropriate planning', we were told all the sites were checked for the possibility of planning being approved, yet five of the chosen sites are inside the boundary of the Heritage Coast.

The Vale's own 'Tour Four' planning policy clearly states no new campsites should be considered inside of this boundary: a fact residents near the other proposed sites need to be aware of.

Despite this, one of these sites has already been granted full planning permission, with the Vale planning department waiving this policy, so that the project can be seen as a success.

We have always promoted local businesses to our visitors and believe that all businesses in the Vale should work together with the planning department and teams such as CRC and find common ground for the good of the Vale.

I am very pleased that the Task Force grant has opened up her business, but I warn her that there is nothing now to stop the CRC team offering grants to landowners with a bit of spare forestry and wanting to diversify using the

28-day rule, applying to CRC for similar grants to open up in competition.

Regarding the point Annette raised "with the downturn in most tourism businesses under the current economic climate", this is exactly the point I am trying to make. For her, it proved money well spent, enhancing existing businesses such as Task Force has helped employment in the area.

The money should not be used to work against existing businesses in such hard times, allowing five small sites in such a small area has only displaced business from us.

If the money had been spent helping existing sites upgrade facilities, as on Task Force, I would be singing the praises of the CRC team too.

On Annette's other statement, "that at the launch she attended, CRC said that many sites were fully booked during the Eisteddfod" – it was the case that only one site was full – Llandow. No one asked us if we were fully booked, or any of the other sites, as far as I am aware.

Annette, we shall still promote your business to our visitors. I am pleased your business has been funded to grow, and I wish you every success in the current climate – but please offer other business owners the same respect and consideration.

MARK EDWARDS,
(Owner, Happy Jake's Touring Park).

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Vandalism
IN recent times, the local council has to be praised for its efforts in providing new shelters at the bus stops in Kenfig Hill and Pyle to protect residents from the inclement weather particularly at this time of year.

However, hooligans see it differently: it appears that the shelters are there to give them pleasure by smashing windows and therefore taking away a lot of the protection (See photo above, right).

Do these mindless idiots not realise that these shelters are used by grandparents, mothers with their young children, people going to work, pupils going to school, people who have to make hospital visits, disabled people and blind people, many of whom could be their own family members?

When I went to take a picture of this vandalism, I met Lyndon Powell from Kenfig Hill, a blind person and his guide dog, who was trying to negotiate his way around the glass on the pavement by going on to the road to avoid his dog getting cut paws, so that he could visit the shop before catching a bus.

He found it most

upsetting that people could get pleasure from carrying out such acts. The bus shelter in question is situated at the bottom of High Street in Kenfig Hill.

When I contacted local borough councillor, Mrs Pauline James about the situation, she informed me that this particular shelter had been targeted before.

In a statement, Mrs James, who incidentally campaigned for these shelters when a community councillor, said it was sad in this day and age that we should have to put up with such despicable behaviour.

SHOUT
MAESTEG SHOUT have organised a meeting at the Bavo offices in Maesteg on Tuesday February 5 at 2pm.

Dorothy Edwards, who is the locality director for Bridgend with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board, is attending to discuss the future of the Princess of Wales Hospital and the future services in Bridgend county borough.

Members of SHOUT forum for the over 50s, are welcome as are members of the public in that age group.

For further information regarding this and

local activities in Kenfig Hill SHOUT, ring Stan Rumble on 01656 741203.

Pupil of the Week
MYNYDD Cynffig Junior School pupils who were nominated for impressing the staff last week:

Liam Knight – Class 1,
Victoria Franklyn – Class 2, Shakur Gough – Class 3, Finley Hampton – Class 4, Codi Pritchard – Class 5, Meghan Evans – Class 6 and Cai Downs – Class 7. The head teachers award went to Ellie Bevan – Class 3.

Special lunch: Congratulations also go to the following pupils, who joined Mr Davies for a special lunch last Friday as a reward for their high standard of behaviour, including politeness to both staff and fellow pupils during lunchtimes last week:

Nathan Chung, Alex Foote-Bruce, Bronagh O'Neil, Kelsey Williams, Hadi Akpinar, Carys Orchard, Mia Hopkins, Lik To Chung, Joshua Hughes and Ryan Legg.
Class 1 Assembly: Class 2 with Mrs Powis will be performing their

assembly on Friday, February 8 in the school hall starting at 10.15am. Parents and grandparents of the pupils taking part are welcome to attend and to stay for refreshments after the performance.

Llys Ton
THE Ogmore Valley Male Voice Choir are performing in Llys Ton, Kenfig Hill on Friday, February 15 at 7pm. Entry is £3, and all are welcome to what should be a most entertaining evening.

For further information regarding the activities at Llys Ton, which is located in Waunbant Road, Kenfig Hill, telephone 01656 745666.

Wellbeing Centre
ACTIVITIES being held by the Mental Health Matters Wales at the Talbot Community, Prince Road, Kenfig Hill on Wednesday, February 6, include arts and crafts with Valley and Vale from 2pm to 4pm; a Carers' Centre talk with Steve from 3pm to 5pm; and the Reading Group from 3pm to 4pm. There will also be

ST MICHAEL'S EXTERIOR IS RESTORED... WORK COMPLETE ON 'WHITE CHURCH' AT COLWINSTON



Work gets under way.



The church, a proud beacon on the Colwinston landscape, is reclaiming its reputation as one of Wales' 'white churches'.

WORK has recently been completed on the exterior of St Michael's & All Angels Church in Colwinston.

It is one of the 'white churches of Wales', and now truly lives up to this epithet once again.

The Grade-1 listed 12th century church underwent major restoration work in 2000, helped by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

When the refurbishment was undertaken at the millennium, the church was lime rendered and lime-washed, not only was this taking the church back to how it would have looked when built in the 12th century but the application of the lime would allow the building to "breathe" as was originally intended.

Since the lime washing in 2000, several

hundred years of water had seeped through the stonework which resulted in considerable staining and damage to the render itself.

This meant a major undertaking to re-lime wash the exterior of the church at a cost of £36,000. A sub committee was set up and three years of fundraising and grant applications followed.

The whole community in Colwinston had worked together to raise funds for the painting project, by putting on a ball and two very successful concerts in the winter months, and holding strawberry teas and open garden days during the summer.

However, this project could not have been realised without funding from the Heritage Lottery.

Further grants were received from the Grant Weston Foundation, the James

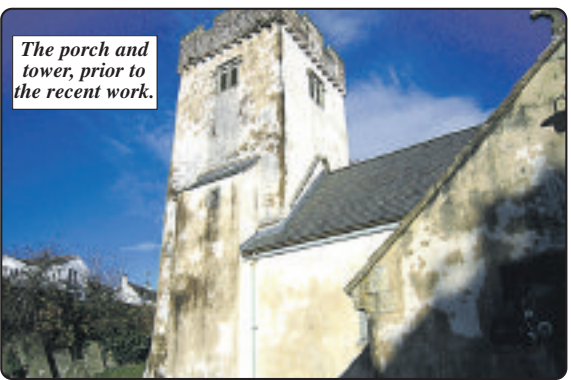
Pantfyedwen Foundation, the Representative Body of the Church in Wales, the Churches & Pastoral Committee, and a Welsh Church Act grant.

Without their financial assistance, the project could not have gone ahead and the community in Colwinston is most grateful to each of the grant providers but in particular the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Our heritage has been protected and once again we have a building at the heart of the community of which we can be proud.

The painting was completed just in time for a village wedding at the end of last year, when the interior was decorated with flowers and candles, and the shining white exterior lit up a dark December afternoon.

PAMELA HAINES,
church warden



The porch and tower, prior to the recent work.

Sandville thanks local restaurant for its support



Guests preparing to enjoy the special celebration award meal

THE Bengal Lounge Restaurant in Kenfig Hill has been in business for just two years but in that time, it has held three charity fundraising evenings for the Sandville Self Help Centre at Tŷn Kenfig.

Receiving a cheque for £1,200 raised recently, Sister Gwyneth Poacher thanked Abdul Kahim, proprietor, and said that she was delighted and overwhelmed by the response that she had received for the Sandville from the restaurant, the management and staff and all those who had attended

Report and pictures by
KEITH E MORGAN

the evening as well as the entertainers who had given their services free in order to make the evening such a success.

Gwyneth stated that the Sandville Centre relies on such donations, both large and small, in order to keep it open and functioning.

She added that the centre is run entirely voluntarily, and currently there are 92 volunteers, who ensure that Sandville provides a full round-the-clock seven-days-per-week service to its patients.

The volunteers came from all walks of life and professions and help at Sandville as carers, cleaners, cooks, therapists, hairdressers or in any other way that they can.

As well as providing cover at Sandville Court, many of these volunteers were drivers who in their own vehicles, conveyed patients back and forth to Velindre, and other hospitals, for treatment.

In the background, often unsung, there were tradespeople, organisations and businesses like the Bengal Lounge, who regularly provided their time, services and funds to keep the wheels at Sandville well oiled and turning.



ABOVE:
The cheque for £1,200 is presented to Sister Gwyneth Poacher of the Sandville, by Abdul Kahim, proprietor of the Bengal Lounge Restaurant.

LEFT:
Dave Jones, Hi Tide, (left) and Gareth Maund, landlord, Prince of Wales, Kenfig, with Alan Griffiths, singer and entertainer.

University of the Third Age entertain Senedd members

DESPITE the snow and blizzards last week, Bridgend county borough's more hardy older folk, were among those who travelled to the Cardiff Senedd to raise the AMs' awareness of the benefits of lifelong learning offered by the 53 U3A groups in Wales.

The event originated as a Porthcawl initiative almost a year ago and because of the interest shown by the Welsh Government, it soon became an all Wales U3A exhibition, sponsored by Deputy Minister for Skills, Jeff Cuthbert AM.

All U3A groups are autonomous and self-funded and members illustrated their wide range of activities and interests to Assembly Members and local authority leaders.

U3A in Wales has a low public profile compared with England, which has twice the membership on a pro-rata population basis, and help was sought to promote and encourage more local U3A study groups to become established in Wales.

Some local groups failed to attend because of the weather, but the Porthcawl coach left the Rest Hotel at 7.30am and snaked its way up a snow-covered M4 to Cardiff. Surprisingly, by mid morning, more U3A groups began arriving, having travelled from Fishguard, Machynlleth, Abegele and Penmaenmawr in north Wales for the event.

Besides creative displays, they provided more than two hours of live entertainment, with comedy sketches in Welsh and English, readings from Porthcawl's Writing for Pleasure group and, what must have been a first for the Senedd, the large but very entertaining Swansea U3A Ukulele band.

The Deputy Minister spent his lunchtime meeting members and said he was impressed with what he had seen and would follow up the initiative. He emphasised the importance of being able to continue interests and skills in retirement.

As the trolley loads of various handicrafts, painting and gardening exhibits began their journey out past the Senedd security officers, I sensed a look of relief on some of their faces!

GARY VICTOR, Porthcawl U3A



Pictured RIGHT: Parish Advisory Council Chair, Jane Sullivan, Father Edmund Neizer and Paul Lindsay, former Chair of the PAC.

Parish says farewell to Father Edmund with a special cake!



THE Roman Catholic parish of Our Lady St Illtyd and St Cadoc's, held a farewell buffet lunch for Father Edmund Neizer on Sunday, January 27.

He is leaving the parish after exactly one year, to become Parish Priest at Tredegar, Ebbw Vale and Rhymney.

The parish presented him with gifts, in gratitude for his work on restructuring parish administration, but, far more, inspiring the parish with his spiritual teaching and energy.

Guests invited to the farewell included ministers from the Church in Wales and United Free Church. They had probably never seen such a magnificent celebration cake as the one made by Gemelli's in Newport, Father Edmund's former parish!

Father Edmund introduced the parish to these special cakes, so, of course, we had to have one to say farewell!

We are fortunate that Father Edmund will be replaced by Father George Areekuzi who comes from Newport, and we will welcome his arrival on February 1.

RS



THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL CYNGOR BRO MORGANNWG Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012

**Development that may affect a Conservation Area/
Datblygu a allai effeithio ar Ardal Gadwraeth**

Application No:/ Rhif y cais: 2013/00036/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig: New three storey dwelling built over existing pool with access formed off Park Road 10, Park Road, Penarth
Location:/Lleoliad: 10, Park Road, Penarth
Conservation Area:/ Ardal Gadwraeth: Penarth

**Conservation Area Consent /
Caniatâd Ardal Gadwraeth**

Application No:/ Rhif y cais: 2013/00037/CAC
Proposal:/Cynnig: Demolition of sections of existing boundary wall to form access to proposed house 10, Park Road, Penarth
Location:/Lleoliad: 10, Park Road, Penarth
Conservation Area:/ Ardal Gadwraeth: Penarth

**Listed Building Consent/
Caniatâd Adeilad Rhedredig**

Application No:/ Rhif y cais: 2013/00048/LBC
Proposal:/Cynnig: Existing garage to be rebuilt and extended in revised position
Location:/Lleoliad: Swanbridge House, St. Marys Well Bay Road, Swanbridge, Penarth

Listed Building:/ Adeilad Rhedredig: Grade II

**Affecting setting of a Listed Building/
Cais (au) sy'n effeithio ar lleoliad Adeilad Rhedredig**

Application No:/ Rhif y cais: 2013/00008/FUL
Proposal:/Cynnig: Revised design for workshop and stores following collapse of garden wall
Location:/Lleoliad: Cwrt yr Ala House, Michaelston Le Pit
Listed Building:/ Adeilad Rhedredig: Affecting Cwrt yr Ala House, Grade II

Details may be inspected for 21 days at the address given below, or via <http://vogonline.planning-register.co.uk/>

Gall manylion eu harchwilio am 21 diwrnod yn y cyfeiriad a roddir isod, neu drwy <http://vogonline.planning-register.co.uk/>

Dated / Dyddiedig: 31 January, 2013

M. Goldsworthy, Operational Manager Development & Building Control, Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Office, Barry. CF63 4RT





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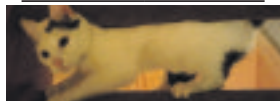
Beautiful Persian cross
Chinchilla Cat.
Silver/Grey/White.

She is a house cat and has
 never been outside. No collar.
 Name is Star. Got shut out of
 house by accident on 15th
 January in Four Acre area of
 Llantwit Major. Reward if found.

Contact **07972 641588**



LOST - 'ZIGGY'



He has been missing since the storm on Sunday
 27th January in Sycamore Crescent, Barry.
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Family Notices

POWELL Gaynor

Suddenly on 19th January at home with her family,
 Gaynor, loving wife of John, much loved mother of
 Neil and Kevin, devoted grandmother of Theo and
 William, much loved sister and sister-in-law, will
 be sadly missed by all family and friends.

Funeral Service at Coychurch Crematorium on
 Monday, 4th February at 1.15pm. Family flowers
 only, donations in lieu, may be sent to either
 Ty Hafan Childrens Hospice, St Hillary Court,
 Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff, CF5 6EF or
 British Heart Foundation, Greater London House,
 180 Hampstead Road, London, NW1 7AW.

McKENZIE Charlotte

Peacefully on January 28th, Charlotte, beloved
 wife of the late Fraser, loving mother of Carolyn,
 will be sadly missed by all family and friends.

Funeral Service at Coychurch Crematorium on
 Wednesday, 6th February 2013 at 1.15pm.
 Family flowers only, donations in lieu may be sent to
 the British Heart Foundation, Greater London House,
 180 Hampstead Road, London, NW1 7AW.

At Charlotte's request no black to be worn,
 bright colours please.

Dorothy DAVY

Dai, Jean and families of the late Dorothy
 Davy would like to thank all friends, neighbours
 and relatives for their messages of sympathy,
 cards, floral tributes and donations received
 at this sad time.

The support by all that attended the service at
 St Illtud's Church was sincerely appreciated.

GIBBS

David Elwyn

Suddenly, but peacefully at home, on the
 20th January, Elwyn of Llantwit Major. Dearly
 loved husband of the late Dylis, and father of
 Rhian and Simon, father in law of Paul and an
 adored Boo-Boo of Elizabeth and Eleanor.
 He will be sadly missed by family and friends.

Resting at W.A. Brown & Son, College Street,
 Llantwit Major until the funeral service in St. Illtud's
 Church on Friday 1st February at 2.00pm, followed by
 cremation at Coychurch Crematorium at 3.15pm.

Family flowers only but donations may be made
 to Ty Hafan c/o the Funeral Director
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DUNCAN

John

Died suddenly on 25th January 2013, John of
 Llantwit Major (originally of Ayr, Scotland). Dearly
 loved husband of Karen, much loved and
 devoted father of Gareth, Bethan and Rebecca.

Love lives on forever

Resting at W.A. Brown & Son, Llantwit Major
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The Stagecoach students' success at LAMDA exams



STUDENTS at Stagecoach Theatre Arts, are celebrating record results in their recent London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) examinations.

The children who entered, aged from seven to 17, took an award in 'Acting' or 'Speaking of Verse & Prose' and all passed, maintaining the school's 100 per cent pass rate and consistently high marks.

The youngest students entered the 'preliminary level', while the oldest three students took their 'Grade 8 gold medal' - all achieving a distinction! The children were assessed on their performance, technique and knowledge, and received a certificate and written review from the external examiners.

Stagecoach principal Helene Reynolds said: "We offer LAMDA awards in addition to our weekly drama, dance and

singing classes. Students can choose to take a LAMDA award to gain an accredited qualification, with the higher grades gaining UCAS points for university entry.

"We are pleased Stagecoach can provide this opportunity for our local children, and delighted by their fantastic results."

For information about Stagecoach, contact Helene on 01446 781454. **HR**

Pencoed work for victory

PENCOED RFC recorded their first double of the season with this hard fought 25-18 win over a much changed Green Stars side at Little Warren.

Pencoed scored in the opening moments, outside half Marc Davies placing a well judged kick downfield, and with left wing Richie Samuel putting the home defence under pressure, they made a hash of the clearance, for Samuel to kick on twice from 35 metres and win the race for an opportunist try.

Davies was again instrumental in Pencoed's second try, a deft grubber getting behind the Green Stars' defence for flanker Aaron Halse to regain possession, before Davies popped up again to make a half break, continued by Samuel who sent No 8 Gareth Prentice over wide out.

The home side hit back through their big pack, Chris Williams driving over, with Christian Roberts adding the extras before Roberts kicked a 50 metre penalty to level matters at 10-10.

Pencoed pressure at a scrum saw scrum half Tom Davies do well to work his way over in the corner.

The half time whistle sounded and despite

Pencoed having much the better of the half they only led 10-15 at the break. The second half opened with Roberts and Davies adding penalty goals respectively for Pencoed to lead 13-18.

Pencoed looked the more dangerous team out wide, however errors were creeping in to the Pencoed performance.

It was not until the 75th minute that Pencoed put some distance between the sides again on the scoreboard.

Once again the Pencoed pack did the business at a close up scrum for player/coach Aaron Halse to get the touchdown, Davies converting for a 13-25 lead going into the final minutes.

To their credit it was the Green Stars who had the final say with a try from Domenich Carroll, and Pencoed lived dangerously until the final whistle, but they can feel well satisfied with a bonus point win away

from home to retain the fourth place in Division 3 South West.

A number of Pencoed players put their hands up for man of the match, both Davies and Howells in particular with good performances.

However the clubhouse vote deservedly went to Iuan Watkins, the former Welsh schools international, displaying an array of skills around the park, allied to some forceful carries in the loose. **TR**

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Paying tribute to Merchant Navy's civilian heroes

THE story about Barry's Merchant seamen by Jim Greenway, (The GEM, January 24) was a very poignant story that I would like to add to in some small detail.

Merchant seamen were civilians, and on one ship that sailed from Barry which was sunk with all hands, the crew included two brothers aged 14 and 15, cabin boys.

Also in terms of losses, Barry suffered the most of all the wartime recognised ports. As they were under civilian contracts, the moment their ship was sunk, their pay was stopped and if it was sunk before 8am, the day's official start time, they lost that day's pay as well.

As many who were rescued could, and did, spend many days at sea, they would not get paid until they had registered for another ship. There was a registrar of shipping near the BBC studios at Llandaff, Cardiff. Films have been made about the sinking of the German battleship *Graf Spee* in the South Atlantic in late 1939, three months after the start of the war. This

ship had sunk many British merchant ships and had captured many of their crew. The Germans had transferred these seamen onto a ship called the *Altmark*.

After the *Graf Spee* was sunk, the *Altmark* was traced entering Norwegian territorial waters. At that time, Norway had not yet been invaded by the Germans and was still neutral. The *Altmark* intended to creep back to Germany through coastal territorial waters.

A British destroyer, *MHS Eskimo*, had been shadowing the *Altmark*. The *Eskimo*'s captain signalled back with this information. Good old Winston Churchill issued the famous order: "Go in and get them."

The destroyer crew boarded the *Altmark* with the famous cry: "The Navy's here!"

The crew were repatriated, some of whom had been prisoners for weeks. No pay for them until they had registered, unlike military prisoners of war who at least were paid backdated after the war.

I hope these little anecdotes may add to the inspiring story of sacrifice. **GERRY PARSONS, Barry.**

It's all go at Porthceri!

CANOLFAN Porthceri Centre is opening its 2013 programme in style with Jelly Roll Jones - 'purveyors of finest quality 20th century blues'.

Jelly Roll Jones will host an evening in the St Francis Millennium Centre, Barry, on Saturday, February 16 at 8pm, tickets £5 on the door or from Dot on 07982319456 or dot.connell@virgin.net.

The band appeared at the 2012 Barry Arts Festival, and plans for this year's festival between May 24 and June 2 are well under way.

Canolfan Porthceri Centre are working in partnership with VOGA, Pukka Productions, Mike Duggan and others to present a diverse programme of events and community projects.

The festival team welcomes Sara Trickey, Ramon Goose and Adran D as part of the music line-up, and Prof Dai Smith, Menna Elfyn and Tony Curtis will head up the literature programme.

Tony Curtis will also premiere his new play *Augustus*, Gwen and Nina, and Cwmni 3-D will perform 'Heb fwg, heb tan' in a preview performance before the

Eisteddfod.

Choirs will be a strong theme this year, and Prof Gareth Williams will talk on the choral tradition in Wales.

Jeff Howard will lead another choral workshop and local community chorus Vale Voices will perform a programme of choral gems, featuring works by Bach, Mozart, Faure and Mendelssohn in the final concert on June 2.

Rehearsals start for this on Monday, February 25 between 5.45pm and 7.15pm in Trinity Church Hall - contact dot@porthceri.co.uk for more details.

Pat Temple-Murray, who co-ordinated last year's stunning wall-hanging, is running three projects this year - yarn-bombing, sculpture/modelling from recycled material, and another wall-hanging project, including one especially for Vale Plus.

For more details, including how to take part, go to www.porthceri.co.uk, visit canolfan.porthceri.co.uk centre on Facebook or contact pat@porthceri.co.uk.



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LLANDOW KART CLUB'S CELTIC CHALLENGE

LLANDOW Kart Club brought the curtain down on its 2012 season with the traditional staging of the Celtic Challenge in the run-up to Christmas.

Although the field was down on the numbers seen throughout the regular championship, the club welcomed both estranged and unfamiliar faces alongside its stalwarts as it ran the rare combination of timed qualifying, two heats and a final for all classes except the Bambinos.

The youngest runners, Oliver Thomas, Shayne Clarke and Brooklyn Thomas, had some difficult conditions to contend with and, for their first two time trials, were, as usual, running on slick tyres while everyone else was on wets. Despite that, all drove extremely well and, after coping with mixed conditions later in the day, managed to achieve gold awards.

As usual, the Cadets produced the biggest grid of the weekend, with 14 runners, but the Comer section was dominated once again by Tom Rawlings, who claimed top spot in each of the four sessions. Max Fenlon was the closest opposition in the final, with Kieran Clarke some way back in third.

The Honda side of the grid was once again the stronger numerically, and shared the honours around, with Joshua Martin topping qualifying and heat one, before Stuart Ferguson



Tom Harvey (No.12) returned to Llandow Kart Club to sweep the Junior Rotax class at the Celtic Challenge. PHOTO BY HARDY RODDE



Matthew Ayres (No.58) claimed the Junior TKM battle at Llandow Kart Club's Celtic Challenge. PHOTO BY HARDY RODDE

came home in front of everyone third time around.

The final, however, went to Ethan Ling, who added to his third place in the main championship by beating Ross Thomas and Alex Rees to the flag and CC plate for 2013.

Echoing Rawlings' clean sweep, Ben Stevens continued his season-long domination of Junior Honda by heading every session ahead of a slim field.

There was a change in his wake, however, as Cristiano Nardone mixed it with perennial pursuers Thomas Croydon and Tom Ford, claiming runner-up honours in qualifying and both heats.

Ford found his form in time for the final, however, beating his rival to second place as Nardone completed the podium.

There was also a whitewash in Junior Max as Tom Harvey returned to his old stomping ground and showed the sort of form that has produced silverware on a national

level this season. The recently-crowned Continental Cup champion was unbeatable in all four sessions, eventually taking the Celtic title ahead of Rob Ellis and another returnee, Harry Williams.

The Minimax class once again rain with its sister class, producing another title for Jodie Handford, who saw off Lucas Wynne and Ceran Sokhi in the final. The visiting Andrew Wong had been the star of the early sessions, however, but was excluded from the final, while Sokhi also picked up a crucial two-place penalty in the main event.

Despite the absence of 2012 class champion Ross Chell, Junior TKM appeared to be going the same way, as Ryan Edwards topped qualifying and both heats, but WMKC interloper Matthew Ayres had other ideas and, having warmed up through the early stages, pounced when it really mattered, as Edwards was forced out of the action after just four laps. Ayres eventually came home

two seconds clear of Joe Phillips, with Yousuf Ashraf completing the top three.

Determined not to allow his rivals any of the seasonal silverware in Senior Honda, Simon Evans added the Celtic crown to his 2012 championship trophy.

It wasn't quite as clear-cut as it sounds, however, for both Nick Turley and the returning High Jones gave Evans something to think about during the day.

Indeed, Turley was the man to beat through qualifying and the heats but, despite posting the fastest lap, failed to make the podium in the main event as Evans came out on top ahead of Jones and Danny Griffiths.

Senior Rotax was a little thinner in number than of late, but still produced a well-matched field. There was no denying Daryl Henderson, however, as he made the most of the format to remain at the front throughout.

Josh Gray, David Entwistle and Dilip Singh gave chase, but in vain as the number 51 ran out winner by six seconds in the final. Entwistle and Singh completed the last podium of the year, while Simon Wheeler took 177 class honours from Nicky Coombs.

RESULTS:
BAMBINO: Gold

Award, Oliver Thomas (Birel); Shayne Clarke (Topkart); Brooklyn Thomas (Birel).

CADET COMER: 1. Tom Rawlings (Zip); 2. Max Fenlon (Birel); 3. Kieran Clarke (Zip).

CADET HONDA: 1. Ethan Ling (Project One); 2. Ross Thomas (Wright); 3. Alex Rees (Zip).

JUNIOR HONDA: 1. Ben Stevens (7Kart); 2. Tom Ford (Biz); 3. Cristiano Nardone (7Kart).

JUNIOR TKM: 1. Matthew Ayres (Jade); 2. Joe Phillips (Jade); 3. Yousuf Ashraf (Jade).

MINI MAX: 1. Jodie Handford (Tonykart); 2. Lucas Wynne (Intrepid); 3. Ceran Sokhi (Kosmic).

JUNIOR ROTAX: 1. Tom Harvey (Tonykart); 2. Rob Ellis (Kosmic); 3. Harry Williams (Tonykart).

SENIOR HONDA: 1. Simon Evans (7Kart); 2. Hugh Jones (MS); 3. Danny Griffiths (MS).

SENIOR ROTAX: 1. Daryl Henderson (Gillard); 2. David Entwistle (Wright); 3. Dilip Singh (CRG).

ROTAX 177: 1. Simon Wheeler (CRG); 2. Nicky Coombs (Tonykart).

Best novice, Harry Cobbold (Senior Rotax); driver of the day, Ryan Edwards (Junior TKM).

CRAIG LLEWELLYN

Compact Chrysler manages to convey its own character

AMERICA is renowned for its enormous Cadillacs and other notorious gas guzzlers, but not with small, efficient hatchbacks.

Not until now anyway. The compact Chrysler Ypsilon, the chic French sounding five-door hatchback looks like a three-door, thanks to concealed door handles at the rear.

This cheeky little yank is actually based on a Fiat 500 and its appearance, mainly due to the bonnet and chrome grille, has hints of the larger Chrysler Voyager about it.

I tested the perky 1.2-litre petrol, finished in an attractive two-tone brown. There's pleasingly a lot of chrome on this vehicle – the chrome door handles are something you don't get very often these days, unless you're in the market for a Rolls.

Step inside and the first thing you notice is that there is no speedometer in front of the steering wheel, which is quite disconcerting, as you can see in the video at test-drives.biz.

Instead, Chrysler has positioned it in the centre of the dashboard together with the rev counter. It might look eye-catching and means that whether it's a left or a right hand drive the speedo doesn't need repositioning, but I don't like it.

It is awkward to constantly look to your left to monitor your speed and particularly irritating when approaching speed cameras.

Aside from this, the interior is pleasingly comfortable and the seats are upholstered in really cosy velour.

It can be noticeably lethargic with a slight delay, reminiscent of the Fiat 500 funnily enough, and so when overtaking in any of the Ypsilon models, plenty of revving is required, but that's not a problem.

You'll also have to be prepared to change down a few cogs to complete the manoeuvre in a safe manner. Demanding drivers though, will enjoy getting the most from the engine and hearing the attractive note emitted when it's under pressure.

It handles varying types of roads proficiently and all occupants arrive at their final destination relaxed.

A little qualm is that the driver has to be careful where they place their hands on the steering wheel because of the angle of the stereo and telephone controls on the wheel.

MOTORING with TIM SAUNDERS



Chrysler Ypsilon.

On a number of occasions, my right hand operated the telephone switches, cutting into the radio programme I'm listening to.

This eye-catching little American seems an efficient car, easily covering 500 miles on a tank of fuel. This is helped by the automatic engine start/stop function.

Parkers, the car experts, says: "The distinctive headlights sitting either side of the shield-shaped grille set it apart from the other, more generic hatchbacks and when you move around to the rear, the drama continues: the well-sculpted LED tail-lights at either side of the boot-opening give the car a unique, yet satisfyingly rounded rear end."

"The Ypsilon has certainly got a European

design (that's a good thing) and it's much more curvy than Chrysler's more sizeable hatchback, the Delta.

"The Ypsilon has the underpinnings of the Fiat 500 and the Ford Ka but it has a longer wheelbase (the same wheelbase as the 2012 Fiat Panda). So, it's a looker (of sorts) and should appeal to those after 'something different'."

Although its boot is large enough for a pushchair, the Ypsilon is perfect for the young, free and single as room in the back is a little tight, but its size makes it ideal for parking in tight spaces.

New price range: £10,695 - £15,695; Power: 69bhp; 0-60mph: 14secs; Top speed: 101mph.

Watch the video at www.testdrives.biz

ON AND OFF THE TURF with Brian Lee

New venue for point-to-point course in Vale

POINT-TO-POINT enthusiasts in the Vale will have a new point-to-point course to visit this season, as the Llangineir Hunt have moved from Laleston to Pyle – where David Brace has his Dunraven Stud Farm.

Unfortunately, though, the popular Bonvilston course which was home to the Pentrych and Countryside Alliance (Wales) meetings has been lost and it is hoped that some time in the future hunt-racing will once again take place at what was a very popular venue.

The South and West Wales point-to-point season gets under way with the first of the two Curre and Llangibby fixtures at Howick, near Chepstow Racecourse, on February 24. However, before then, a number of Welsh riders and horses will be in action at the North Hereford at Whitwick Manor on February 16.

Point-To-Point meetings:
February 16, North Hereford at Whitwick Manor; February 24, Curre and Llangibby at Howick near

Chepstow.
March 2, Duke of Beaufort's at Didmarton; March 3, South Herefordshire at Garnons; March 9, Brecon and Talybont at Llanfrynach; March 16, Curre and Llangibby at Howick near Chepstow; March 17, Ross Harriers at Garnons; March 17, Tivyside at Cilwendig; March 23, Glamorgan at Ystradowen; March 24, Ledbury at Maisemore Park; March 30, Monmouthshire at Llanvaplwy.

SPEED STEED
SPEED STEED, a six-year-old bay gelding owned by Mr J H Frost and trained by Tim Vaughan at Aberthaw, was a 16-1 winner of the Coral.co.uk Mobile Betting Handicap over one mile and six furlongs at Wolverhampton last Saturday.

Partnered by 7lb claimer Daniel Muscutt, Speed Steed won by three parts of a length from the 9-4 favourite Liberty Love in a field of ten runners.

You can e-mail your news or views to Brian Lee at brianlee4@virgin-media.com or phone him on 02920736438.

New running club is launched

THE women-only club 'Women Running Penarth', is launching a Barry branch.

The Penarth-based club, formed in 2011, now has more than 100 members.

Spokeswoman Elaine Jones said: "The new Barry beginners sessions start on Monday, February 4 at 7.15pm, meeting outside Morrisons, where new runners will receive a warm welcome from Jo (07776 316630) or Nic (07908 101130)."

"We welcome women

of all ages and abilities and are always pleased to hear from those who are new to running or perhaps returning after a long break.

"Women Running Penarth offers the opportunity for any woman to run in a supportive and safe environment, to challenge yourself physically as much or as little as you want and to meet other women who are interested in keeping fit and making new friends."

For further information, go to www.women-runningpenarth.org.uk.

Entries open for world's biggest fundraising swim

THE world's biggest fundraising swim is back for another year and Marie Curie Cancer Care is urging swimmers across Cardiff and the Vale to sign up for a new challenge for 2013.

Held at over 600 pools across the UK from 26-28 April, the event sees thousands of swimmers challenge themselves through 5k, 2.5k and 1.5k individual challenges or Team 5k/1.5k challenges, while raising funds to help Marie Curie Nurses care for terminally ill people at the end of their lives.

Presenter, Tim Lovejoy and Swimathon president/Olympic gold medalist, Duncan Goodhew, launched the event this month with the unveiling of their Swimathon Squad.

Locally, people can take part in a number of sites, including Cardiff International Pool, Splott, Barry, Penarth and Llantwit Major

leisure centres.

Samantha Coles, community fundraiser for South East Wales, said: "Every year people across Cardiff and the Vale take on a Swimathon challenge and have a great time raising funds along the way. You can even choose to take part individually or as part of a team. This year we hope even more people will take the plunge and raise funds to help Marie Curie Nurses provide more free nursing care to terminally ill people in their own homes."

Marie Curie Cancer Care gives people with all terminal illnesses the choice to die at home. Funds raised by taking on Swimathon 2013 will help Marie Curie Nurses provide them and their families with free hands-on care and emotional support, in their own homes, right until the end.

Enter online for a Swimathon session before January 31, and you'll enjoy half price entry. Swimmer entry is open at www.swimathon.org until April 24.

DINAS POWYS RFC TOO STRONG FOR HIRWAUN

A STUNNING display of complete team rugby saw the 'Villagers' of Dinas Powys overwhelm a feisty Hirwaun team by scoring 12 tries without conceding a point.

The talented three-quarters scored 10 of these tries, with the back row adding the other two.

The home side took 10 minutes to open their account and the early stages saw the visitors have good field positions.

Only a powerful drive after five minutes saw the home side win a scrum against the head to clear their lines.

The home scrum provided a solid platform through the afternoon and the front row of tighthead Mike Jones, hooker Lloyd Horwood and loose head prop Tom Paterson once again did the hard work to produce quality ball for their fleet-footed colleagues to show their pace.

The first score looked certain to come following a stunning break by mercurial centre Dai Lloyd but with only the full back to beat the scoring pass soared above the head of right wing Sam Alderman.

It was a case of déjà vu for Alderman as a few minutes later scrum half Nathan Williams made a trademark break, but failed to supply the scoring pass to the bleach-haired winger.

The fear that this was going to be one of those



Centre John Evans with wing Sam Alderman in support. Photo by Mark Harris.

frustrating days was assuaged by a sweeping move that allowed centres Dai Lloyd and John Evans to combine to free speedy left wing James Smith, who scored in the left corner.

Dinas Powys were rampant, and a loose clearance kick was collected by James Smith at full pace on halfway who then passed to Alderman.

A series of passes freed full back Adam Williams to score the first of his three tries, and with Gavin Cooper adding the conversion after a quarter of an hour the 'Villagers' led 12-0.

Following a turnover won by second row James Walters in their own 22-metre area, the ball was passed 16 times before flanker Morgan Williams crashed over in the shadow of the posts.

The bonus point-gaining fourth try was scored after 25 minutes following a powerful drive by outstanding second row John Morgan, which allowed scrum half Nathan Williams to

The second half was an ill-tempered affair that saw two players from each side yellow carded and the home players showed huge commitment in defending their line even though victory was assured.

Pack leader Nick Veggas was to the fore in this effort, and the flame-haired flanker, rejuvenated by his move to the backrow, produced another quality performance.

The forwards were superb and produced a plethora of possession for the threequarters, who were guided by Cooper at fly half, with an accomplished performance, varying his game and controlling his backline with aplomb, showing no ill effects following his recent bout of food poisoning.

The clubhouse was indeed a happy place following the game with coaches Darlington, Boyland and Vesey receiving the plaudits from hardworking club chairman Keith Bryan.

Long-serving club secretary Cameron Mackay mused that his longstanding try scoring record is under threat from several of the current team if the team continue their rich vein of try scoring form.

HJ

Local Tae Kwon Do students triumph in charity event in Dorset



ON January 27, Tae Kwon Do students from Rhoose and Llantwit Major travelled to Dorset, England to compete in the Sam Aldridge Cup.

This tournament was founded by Master Gordon Fearn, England team captain and former world champion, to support and donate to charity.

Sam Aldridge was a brave young man who fought against cancer some years ago; he

achieved his black belt in Tae Kwon Do and every year a tournament is attended by students from all areas.

On the day, Mr Schembri, head instructor of JSTKD TKD Schools, took the team to the event, with many medals won in both patterns and sparring.

"Our students, who acted with a great respect, won a medal in most divisions. They really made a good account of themselves and where they come from."

Students are pictured above

from the local Rhoose and Llantwit schools - Hannah Hunt, Emily Hunt, Ashton Cumick, Menna Birmingham, Rian Thomas, Rhys Doel, Emily Dimmick, Kai Wheeler, Josh Edwards, Harry Birmingham, Harry Thomas.

Classes are held throughout the Vale, for information please visit jstkd.co.uk or call Mr Schembri on 07711234500.

JS

Weather decimates the chess fixtures

WITH the poor weather conditions this week there have been numerous chess postponements, including the Quarks' home match against Pontypridd.

The Bridgend team deserve plaudits for making their way to Caerphilly to play their

match at the height of the poor conditions last Monday.

For Barry we were left with one remaining match away to Cardiff. There was some doubt about the viability of playing this match due to the snow and ice but thankfully the match was completed with a satisfactory win for the Bosons by a score of 4 - 1.

Snow plays havoc with darts games

THE snow last week played havoc with the Tuesday night darts matches.

Only the game at the Hare and Hounds, of the five matches scheduled for January 22, was played. In that game the Hare and Hounds closed the gap on the Edmondson 'A' in third place to one point by defeating them 6-3.

League standings; Edmondson 'B' (53 points), Llanharry (49), Edmondson 'A' (46), Hare and Hounds (45), Farmers Arms (35), Carne Arms & White Lion (33), Cross Inn (30), Old Post Ladies (25) and Highwayman Inn (20).

On February 5 the semi-finals and final of the men's doubles will be

played at the Carne Arms.

In the first semi-final Simon Reader and John Izzard (Hare & Hounds) play Martin Thomas and Mathew Pay (Edmondson 'B'), while in the other Dai Thomas and Jonathan Cheal (Edmondson 'B') play Noyle Burt and Bill Foulds (Cross Inn). Also on that night, all rounds, including the final of the ladies doubles, will be played at the Edmondson Arms.

For further information and any enquiries please e-mail Paul at cwbridgedarts@googlemail.com; up-to-date information on upcoming matches, league results and league table can be found on the website: www.darts.apsn.co.uk.

PT

Sea View Lads angling results

SEA VIEW Lads have made a sporadic start to the year with mixed catches being landed with a conspicuous lack of codling.

Cardio tennis in Dinas

FOLLOWING the success of tennis as an Olympic sport last summer, with Andy Murray winning gold and silver medals, Dinas Powys Lawn Tennis Club has been awarded a grant to run an adult fitness course in Cardio Tennis.

No tennis skills are required but participants will pick up ball skills as they get fit with a cardio workout to music. Non-members are particularly welcome to take part every Saturday morning from 9am to 10am with no cost involved - just call or text 07909987359 to book a place for group sessions from February 2.

Children can also come along to join in mini tennis groups at a cost of £2 for non-members each Saturday morning.

NW

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Young Ryan's boxing success

RYAN ADKINS (age 14) from the Barry East End Amateur Boxing Club, became Welsh Amateur Novice champion on Sunday, January 27, at the OLCF club, Bridgend.

Ryan was up against Evan Phillips from Brecon. Phillips came out all guns blazing, forcing Adkins onto the back foot but Adkins stayed composed and boxed his opponent with straight shots.

Adkins grew stronger as the bout went on to win on points by 24-11. Coaches Leon and Alan Lamb are proud of Ryan and said he boxed really well and will only get better.

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09 59 PEUGEOT 207 1.6 HDi 90 S 5-Dr Estate. Red, Diesel, 1 Owner, FSH, Air Con, CD Player, Alloys, 65k

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06 56 RENAULT Clio 1.5 DCi 86 Dynamique, 3-Dr. Black, Diesel, Climate Control, Dual Sunroof, FSH, Alloys, CD Player, 80k

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09 09 AUDI A3 1.9 TDI 5-Dr. Grey, Diesel, Sat Nav, F Audi SH, 1 Owner, Parking Sensor, Climate Control, 83k

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05 05	PORSCHE Cayenne 4.5 Turbo S Auto.	51,600, in grey	£19,613
06 06	MERCEDES CLK55.	44,225 miles, in silver	£19,495
06 06	MASARATI Cambriocorsa.	37,535 miles, in grey	£18,995
06 56	MERCEDES Benz ML320 CDI.	45,000 miles in silver	£16,995
03 03	PORSCHE 911.	70,700 miles, in black	£16,644
01 X	MERCEDES SL320.	47,470 miles, in mystic blue	£14,495
04 04	MERCEDES Benz SL350.	69,260 miles, silver	£13,850
09 59	HONDA RF-V CTDi.	44,640 miles, in black	£11,995
08 08	MITSUBISHI Outlander 2.4 Elegance Auto.	43,780 miles, in grey	£11,995
07 07	BMW 320D M-Sport.	53,050 miles, in red	£11,995
09 09	MINI Cooper Graphite 1.6p.	13,810 miles, in grey	£10,995
11 61	MINI 16 One.	14,240 miles, in grey	£10,495
11 61	FORD Fiesta Zetec.	11,230 miles, in black	£9,995
07 07	MERCEDES BENZ C220 CDI Auto.	54,800 miles, in black	£9,995
09 09	RENAULT Clio Sport.	39,690 miles, in white	£9,495
07 07	MITSUBISHI L200 Warrior.	88,350 miles, in black	£9,495+vat
07 57	VOLKSWAGEN Golf 2.0 TDI GT 5-dr.	60,870 miles, in silver	£8,995
07 07	VOLVO 2.4d V50 D5SE Sport.	88,460 miles, in black	£8,880
10 10	FORD Focus Style 1.6 TDCi	28,910 miles in black	£8,795
2007	KAWASAKI 250 Supercharged Jet Ski.	68 hours use (phone for details)	£8,495
06 56	BMW 116i SE.	48,480 miles, in grey	£7,995
02 52	JAGUAR XKR Supercharged,	91,890 miles in black	£8,716
09 59	FORD Fiesta 1.25 Zetec.	8,020 miles, in blue	£7,628
09 09	FIAT 500 Sport	31,165 miles in white	£7,995
07 57	HONDA Civic Sport I-Shift Auto.	18,080 miles, in grey	£7,495
10 10	PEUGEOT 207 Sport	13,890 miles, in grey	£6,995
08 58	FIAT 500 1.2 Lounge.	49,880 miles, in white	£6,995
08 58	MAZDA 3 Takara	23,700 miles in silver	£6,995
08 58	TOYOTA Auris 1.6 VVTi TR 5-dr.	27,230 miles, in blue	£6,495
06 56	HONDA Civic	48,890 miles, in silver	£6,295
10 10	PEUGEOT 207 Verve,	29,700 miles, in grey	£6,181
09 09	PEUGEOT 207 1.4VTi S 5-dr.	18,720 miles, in blue	£5,995
07 57	MAZDA 3 Sport	46,000 miles, in blue	£5,341
06 06	TOYOTA MR-2	48,640 miles, in red	£4,995
06 06	FORD Fiesta Zetec S TDCi.	62,000 miles, in red	£4,795
07 07	RENAULT Megane Estate 1.5 Dci Dynamique.	76,540 miles, in silver	£4,495
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08 JAGUAR X-Type 2.0 Diesel (Face Lift). In black, 71,000 miles, fantastic value **£7,995**
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GEM sport



Pictures courtesy of the
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LEFT: Welsh players take a break from training: Left to right: Wales captain Sam Warburton and squad members, Leigh Halfpenny, Toby Faletau, George North, Jamie Roberts, Mike Phillips, James Hook and Jonathan Davies. They are pictured alongside crew members of the 'new generation' Wales Air Ambulance, which could now have up to 300-plus emergency landing sites – thanks to a new WRU-backed scheme nominating rugby clubs around the country, which could accommodate the charity's life-saving helicopter.

Top right: Wales' 'Mr Indispensable', tight head prop Adam Jones.

Right: A new face, thanks to his grandad, Harlequins' Olly Kohn.



Wales can use opener against Ireland as launch pad to end the depressing spiral of defeat

(...But time is long overdue to look at the role of the referee)

SO, here we go again...the 2013 Six Nations championship, whose outcome – even more than usual – is well nigh impossible to predict (though, in truth, it's an obsessive media practice that this column usually seeks to avoid!)

Picking an outright Grand Slam winner is particularly pointless, though, in a season that has been badly distorted by injuries and bedevilled by form and unavailability issues to an unprecedented extent – certainly in the case of Wales, who open their defence of the title they won last year against Ireland at the Millennium Stadium, on Saturday.

Any sober assessment of Welsh

chances of a rare back-to-back Grand Slam, is made doubly difficult, given that caretaker coach Robert Howley has opted to delay naming his starting line-up until later today, Thursday – just two days before the kick-off – proof enough of the selection dilemmas he faces, particularly up front, and the consequent need to keep the opposition guessing.

With the abrasive Irish pack reportedly licking their lips at the prospect of taking on a perceived weakness in the Welsh front five, all eyes will turn on Howley's team sheet today – in particular, the denuded second row, deprived of regular first choice players, and with question marks hanging over the match readiness of other familiar

names, both up front and behind.

An indication of this was the sudden introduction into the national squad of several promising, but untried players, and also the surprise enlistment from outside the squad on Friday of 31-year-old Harlequins second row, Olly Kohn, who (fortuitously, it turns out) has a Welsh grandfather!

While it would be an exaggeration to view all this as proof of a 'crisis' in the camp, there can be no doubting the Welsh title holders' concern over the disruption to their preparations for a tournament that this year holds extra significance for all home nations' players, with the lure of a Lions' summer

BACK PAGE COMMENT

by Don John

tour in the offing. More importantly, there is the urgent need to arrest a worrying downward spiral in Welsh rugby that has seen the four regions fail (again) in Europe, and the national team lose seven of their last eight outings, including two 'whitewashes' by southern hemisphere teams – in Australia last summer and Cardiff in the autumn.

Thus, Saturday's Six Nations opener is a high pressure test in more ways than one, for both the players and the Welsh coaches – after all, Ireland have won 10 out of the last 16 clashes between these arch rugby rivals.

On the flipside, Wales can point to a 23-21 victory in Dublin last year, en route to their third Grand Slam in eight years, and also the ruthless 22-10 demolition of the men in green in the quarter final of the 2011 Rugby World Cup in New Zealand, following on the 19-13 Welsh win earlier that year.

Moreover, the record books reveal that they have won 65 of the 118 meetings, to Ireland's 47 – with six games drawn. This close-fought rivalry is borne out by the overall points totals: Wales 1,393 pts to Ireland's 1,260 pts.

The 'no-holds-barred' nature of these often stormy encounters between Celtic cousins was laid down from their very first clash on January 28, 1882 at Lansdowne Road, Dublin. The 8-0 result was

Wales' first victory on the international rugby field, in a match that one contemporary observer, in a masterpiece of understatement, said was "disrupted by disputes on both sides"...

The fiery tradition will no doubt be resumed this weekend, and as usual will need firm, but enlightened handling by the man with the whistle.

It is fervently to be hoped, then, that the result will not be determined by the kind of baffling inconsistency, both in terms of interpretation and implementation of the laws – which has been all too prevalent among big match officials of late.

With the professional game's current over-emphasis on brute, physical force, as opposed to flair and guile – reflected in an ever-rising injury toll – there are serious health and safety concerns that the game's administrators, who, after all, have a duty of care to players (employees), would do well to take heed of, to avoid potentially grave consequences.

They could start by taking a long overdue look at the whole method of control on the field of play, for the demands of today's professional game seem to put this task beyond the powers of one man to manage.

It surely calls for far more shared responsibility by all match officials.

Why, oh why, aren't the two 'Assistant Referees' more pro-active involved in the action, rather than do little more than wave a flag in the air occasionally, as did linesmen in the old amateur days?

They and the TMO – 'Television Match Official' (another impressive title with a limited function!) need to actively intervene, do as their job

titles suggest, and ASSIST the referee, who nowadays cannot be expected to see everything going on around him.

In this way, cynical, off-the-ball actions, so-called 'professional fouls' and other blatant (and not so blatant) transgressions, could be decisively dealt with on the spot – unlike during Wales' autumn series, when unacceptable acts of brutality went unpunished. (I don't mean the misuse of yellow cards, intended only for technical offences).

With four pairs of eyes, each given direct responsibility for monitoring various areas of play – setpiece, the tackle area, off-the-ball incidents etc, but with the referee, of course, having the last word – it could even dispense with the need for a citing commissioner!

As has been stated in this column many times before, we all accept that rugby football is, by its very nature, a physical contact sport – but it is NOT cage-fighting, or all-in wrestling!

It is, after all, supposed to be a sport suitable for family viewing, with a worldwide TV audience! (It would be interesting to know what readers think. Contact: don.john@tindlenews.co.uk)

For now, though, the spotlight turns to Cardiff at 1.30 pm on Saturday, where despite everything, the loyal legions of ever-optimistic followers hope that Welsh strength in depth will prove equal to meeting the Irish threat – and gain momentum for a return to winning ways, notwithstanding recent setbacks.

Who is to say, despite the doubters, that this confidence is misplaced? (SEE SPECIAL SIX-NATIONS FEATURE ON PAGE 15)

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